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SERMONS

On the following

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

THE Propensity that there is in Mankind universally to make their own Righteousness the Ground of their Confidence.

SUCH Righteousness proved to be essentially deficient: which is readily acknowledged by all, who know the Truth as it is in Jesus.

IMPUTED Righteousness one of the Glories of the Gospel.

AN Inquiry into St. Paul's Meaning in *Philip. ii. 12,*

13. "Work out your own
" Salvation with fear and
" Trembling. For it is
" God who worketh in you
" both to will and to do of
" his good Pleasure."

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THE following Discourses were originally designed for the Pulpit only ; but are now published at the Desire of many who heard them. The Writer is sensible, that most of the Sentiments contained in them, are not popular, but he believes them to be divine : calculated to humble the Sinner, and to exalt the SAVIOUR. Which is the grand End of the Gospel. In Proportion as this End shall be answered, by the following Publication, he shall rejoice.



S E R M O N I.

Mankind are universally apt to trust in their own
Righteousness.

PHILIP. III. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

*If any other Man thinketh he hath whereof he might trust in
the Flesh, I more :*

*Circumcised the eighth Day, of the Stock of Israel, of the Tribe
of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the Law,
a Pharisee ;*

*Concerning Zeal, persecuting the Church ; touching the Right-
eousness which is in the Law, blameless.*

*But what Things were gain to me, those I counted Loss for
CHRIST.*

*Yea doubtless, and I count all Things but Loss, for the Excel-
lency of the Knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD ;
for whom I have suffered the Loss of all Things, and do count
them but Dung that I may win CHRIST ;*

*And be found in Him, not having mine own Righteousness,
which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of
CHRIST, the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith.*

THE two leading points of St. Paul's ministry were,
the fall of man, with its nature and extent ; and
the gracious recovery by CHRIST. He was in-
defatigable in his attempts to convince mankind
of these, that so their lofty looks might be brought
low, and the LORD alone exalted. These sentiments ap-
peared to him of great importance ; hence it was that he
embraced every favourable opportunity to propagate them.

To

To which he was greatly excited by his own experience of a deep rooted enmity to CHRIST, and an aptness to trust in the flesh. A temper of mind which he knew to be not only inveterate, but universal; fallen human nature being the same in every age and nation. Against which the gospel of the grace of GOD is the only sovereign antidote. Sensible of this, when our apostle visited *Philippi*, a city of *Macedonia*, he made *CHRIST and Him crucified* the subject of his ministry; and had this for his comfort, that many of the *Philippians* became obedient to the faith. These were incorporated into a gospel-church-state; and were happy for a time in the enjoyment of the special privileges of the church of CHRIST. But after St. Paul's departure, grievous wolves entred in, not sparing the flock: men of corrupt minds, who tried to draw away disciples after them. The apostle received the sorrowful tidings, and wrote them this epistle by the hand of *Ephroditus*, who was a messenger from the saints at *Philippi* to him while in confinement at *Rome*; and had ministered to his wants. It's contents are various and useful; but come not under our consideration at present, except so far as they are connected with the text.

IN the first verse of this chapter he assures the *Philippians* that it was far from being grievous to him, and would be safe for them to repeat the same things in writing, that had been the subjects of his personal ministry among them. And for which there was at that time a special necessity, arising from the endeavours of false-teachers to pervert his gospel; by leading them to the observance of circumcision, and other *Jewish* rites, in order for acceptance with GOD. These men he treats with a degree of just severity. Verse 2d, *Beware of dogs*,—"St. Paul here very properly calls the false teachers "dogs, because, as dogs, they did rend and tare the *simpli-*
"city of the gospel, and divided the glory of man's salvation
"between faith and works; because, as dogs, they barked
" out

“out reproaches against the apostles and their doctrine, delivered in its native purity and simplicity.” * And as dogs they were *without*; and as *fierce* dogs, they laboured to devour.

BEWARE of evil workers—A sentence farther descriptive of the same persons, who wrought not *with* St. Paul, but *against* him; and endeavoured to pull down what he had carefully built up. Between whom there was this important difference; Paul built on CHRIST, as the sure foundation which God had laid: they built on *Moses*. Paul taught that if any man was circumcised, he became a debtor to do the whole law; and that by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified: they taught that it was necessary to be circumcised, and to keep the law in order to justification. Paul was under the influence of the Spirit of God: they were led away by a spirit of error and delusion. It is added,

BEWARE of the concision. A name which the apostle seems here to give to circumcision, by way of disapprobation; and as expressive of the injury which the church of CHRIST might receive from these men, who endeavoured to perpetuate that rite, with the whole law of ceremonies. Thereby *cutting themselves off* and those that adhered to them, as far as they could, from CHRIST, and the way of life through Him. For *CHRIST is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.* † i. e. the doctrine of grace.

HAVING thus cautioned the *Philippians* against false teachers, the apostle proceeds to speak of himself and his brethren, in opposition to them. Verse 3d, *For we are the circumcision.* q. d. Though we lay aside that rite, and have nothing to do with the circumcision of the flesh; we have that “of which it was a shadow,” even the circumcision of the heart.

For

* Dr. Smith's Annotations in loc. † Gal. v. 4.

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh : But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of man, but of GOD. ‡

WHICH worship GOD in the spirit : i. e. with our soul or spirit ; and in that spiritual way that God hath appointed ; being assisted by the Holy Spirit, who helpeth our infirmities, &c.

AND rejoice in CHRIST JESUS : this is said to distinguish them from those who rejoiced in themselves, and in their submission to legal institutions.

AND have no confidence in the flesh : q. d. Whatever is our course of obedience, we lay no stress on it ; but view it as a cipher in the great affair of justification. Though, says St. Paul, I might have confidence in the flesh : meaning upon the principles of these false teachers. To prove which, he brings in the text. If any other man thinketh he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more : circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews ; as touching the law, a Pharisee ; concerning zeal, persecuting the church ; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for CHRIST. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win CHRIST, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of CHRIST, the righteousness which is of GOD by faith.

THE former part of the passage is St. Paul's narrative of the privileges of his birth, his strict manner of life, and his confidence

fidence in them for justification before God. In the latter part of it, he declares that his apprehension of things was altered; and that he was now sensible of his former, ruinous mistake. And therefore that he did, most heartily, count all those things which were *gain* to him before, but *lost and dung* that he might win CHRIST, and be found in Him. The following particulars are proposed for consideration.

I. ALL unregenerate men are apt to trust in their own righteousness.

II. SUCH righteousness proved to be essentially defective.

III. THE sinner, upon his becoming experimentally acquainted with the grace of the gospel, is thereby led to renounce all confidence in the flesh; and to expect acceptance with God, *only* on account of the perfect righteousness of JESUS.

I. ALL unregenerate men are apt to trust in their own righteousness.

SELF-APPROBATION, and self-confidence are first principles; they are natural to man, and grow up with him. Nothing is more common than for man to entertain a good opinion of himself, and therefore he is not apprehensive of danger in trusting to himself. Why should he be afraid to put confidence in one, whom he views with so much esteem?

THIS spirit is interwoven with man's whole soul, and discovers itself in the common affairs of life. Accordingly we find that men in general give the preference to their own understanding; and are all attention while others are lavish of their praises. Why? but because they are fond of themselves, and think they deserve to be equally esteemed by others. On the other hand, with what difficulty do persons under
the

the influence of this fondness for themselves, brook an affront? They are ready to think, if they do not say so, That men of their importance, deserve better treatment. *Is thy servant a dog*, said Hazael to Elisha, *that he should do this great thing?* §§ No verily, Hazael is a better man, as if he had said, than to bring such calamities on Israel; and thou Elisha, the man of GOD art surely mistaken in his character—Yet soon after he did it.

COULD this spirit be confined to temporal things, the hazard that men run would be infinitely less. Though in this case, *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.* * But when it is introduced, and prevails in those things in which men have to do with JEHOVAH, they run the dreadful risque of losing their souls: for a self-righteous Pharisee will be as surely damned, as an openly profane sinner. This *harsh saying*, as some may deem it, is sufficiently proved by the text, and by all those passages of scripture which denounce woes against Pharisees. Paul knew that his confidence in the flesh would have terminated in his loss of heaven, if the LORD had not brought him to see the insufficiency of his own righteousness; and enabled him to fly for refuge to the Hope set before him. Hence he counted all but *loss* that he might *win* CHRIST and be found in Him.

BUT nothing can be more to the purpose, than our LORD's conduct toward the self-righteous Pharisees in the days of his flesh. He places them in the same class with Scribes and Hypocrites; and eight times, in the course of one chapter † addresses them with, *Wo unto you.* ‡ Which He concludes with these awful words, *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* §

BUT

§§ 2 Kings, viii. 13. * Prov. xxviii. 26. † Mat. xxiii.

‡ Ver. 13, 14, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29. § Ver. 33.

BUT such is human depravity, that mankind universally, considered in unbelief, entertain this fondness for themselves. It is what they soonest discover, and part with latest. We see our children, as soon as they learn to distinguish good from evil, ready to place great confidence in some supposed goodness. They are not guilty of this evil and the other; and are not so bad as some who are within the circle of their acquaintance. And hence are ready to infer the goodness of their state. Neither is this to be confined to the follies of childhood and youth; verily it is the folly of men of every age. Under its influence *Paul* became a noted zealot. For all his religion was founded on this principle. This he frankly confesses.

THERE are many things that might be mentioned, to prove the universality of this fatal temper.

I. THE general drift of the holy scriptures. Every man who does not wilfully shut his eyes must observe, that one manifest design of the word of GOD, is to lead mankind to form a proper estimate of their own character, and thereby prevent their putting confidence in themselves. Accordingly the corruption of the world, is represented as extending to every individual of the race of *Adam*; and to every power and faculty of the human soul. *They are ALL gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is NONE that doth good, no not ONE.** Now we know that what things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law: that EVERY mouth might be stopped, and ALL the WORLD may become guilty before GOD. ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of GOD. † Passages of the same import are numerous; all tending to prove that the WHOLE WORLD is become GUILTY before GOD.

B

Now

* *Psa.* xiv. 3. compared with *Rom.* iii. 10, 23.

Now that corruption that extends to all mankind, is proved by the same infallible volume to reach to all the faculties of the souls of men. Attend to the following scriptures. *And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that EVERY imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* † Note, "Every imagination was evil, and that continually.—We also read that *the carnal mind is enmity against GOD.* § That the *understanding is darkened*, *the will obstinate, the affections inordinate. The natural man is said *not to receive the things of the Spirit of GOD; they are foolishness unto him.* He is represented *dead in sins, alienated from GOD; an enemy in his mind by wicked works.* St. Paul declares, *that they that are in the flesh cannot please GOD.* And CHRIST assured Nicodemus, *that that which is born of the flesh, is flesh.* † By being *in the flesh*, nothing less is meant than the totally corrupt condition of every man before regeneration. In this state he is by nature; for he *is born of the flesh, and he is flesh; yea he is all flesh.* i. e. wholly carnal; depraved in every part.

THE living oracles abound with passages, immediately designed to prove that human nature is in a state of *total corruption*; of which those above cited, are only a specimen.

FROM hence I would observe, that the infinitely great God knowing the propensity that there is in man, to think well of, and to trust in himself, saw it necessary thus to exhibit his dreadful character, in its true light.

2. THAT this principle is both general, and dangerous, may be learnt from the whole tenor of the gospel. The gospel of CHRIST is calculated to bring down the lofty looks of man, that the LORD alone may be exalted. It is good news to sinners; yea the chief of such. It considers all men on a level;

† Gen. vi. 5. § Rom. viii. 7, 8. * Eph. iv. 18, John v. 40.
1 Cor. ii. 14. Eph. ii. 1. † John iii. 6.

level ; that is, *lost, guilty, and helpless*. As in debt ten thousand talents, and having nothing to pay. One cannot plead the privileges of his birth, as giving him the preference ; another cannot introduce the obedience of his life, as a reason why mercy should first be exercised towards him. On the contrary, all who are saved according to the riches of grace, are brought as with one voice to plead guilty ; saying, " LORD be merciful to me a *sinner*." The salvation that the gospel sets before us, is altogether sovereign and unmerited. Consequently one man has no more right to it than another. The LORD will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of GOD who sheweth mercy. †—Thus the grace of GOD, which is most illustriously displayed in the gospel, destroys all boasted distinctions among men.

THERE was a remarkable distinction, long kept up between *Jews and Gentiles*. The former treated the latter with contempt ; while they concluded that they alone were GOD's peculiar people. But this glorious gospel immediately tended to annihilate this distinction ; by teaching the converted *Jews, That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise of GOD in CHRIST.* †

FROM the premises I remark, That it is necessarily supposed in the doctrines of CHRIST, that mankind are universally apt to trust in themselves. For why should the LORD reveal such a gospel to us, which in its very nature tends to debase the sinner, and to destroy self-confidence, if men were not in danger of being led away by this spirit ?

3. We farther learn this melancholy truth from the ministry of the apostles. Sensible that it was one grand
end

† Rom. ix. 15, 16. † Eph. iii. 6.

end of the gospel, to irradicate this temper, they invariably pointed all their artillery against it. To prove this observation by quotations from the epistles of the several apostles, would lead me unavoidably to trespass on your patience. Neither is it necessary, seeing they all adopted the same plan of preaching, and were of one mind as to the leading truths of the gospel. Therefore when you hear one of them, in a sense you hear the rest. They all unite in describing the corruption of human nature, and the redemption that we have in CHRIST. Doctrines that are entirely opposite to the carnal mind; and which, according to the rules of human prudence, required much art to introduce them, with the smallest prospect of success. Had they proceeded upon the plan of pleasing men, they might have kept back some of the doctrines; but half delivered others, passing over in silence such things, as tended to irritate the corrupt mind; and have interspersed through the various parts of their discourses, so many extenuations of human depravity, that even sinners themselves would have had no objections. But such a conduct they held in the greatest contempt. And being confident that the success of the gospel, did not depend upon their artful recommendation of it, but on the supernatural influence of the Spirit of God, they determined in the name of the LORD, that they would preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And though no part of their ministry would probably expose them more to the popular odium, than a clear, and an impartial account of the sinners state both by nature and practice; they made it a leading point. They seem to have been under no fears that they should depreciate human nature, or rob man of his fancied dignity; knowing that it was impossible to exaggerate on this occasion. In the first sermon that was preached after the descent of the HOLY GHOST, the *Jews* are charged with the *murder* of JESUS of *Nazareth*; and are painted in the blackest colours. The charge

charge is often repeated in the course of the apostle's ministry: and notwithstanding some are enraged at them, and they cast into prison; thousands are converted to christianity. * In no softer language than the following, does Stephen speak to the people, "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do *always resist the HOLY GHOST*: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the JUST ONE; of whom ye have been now the *betrayers and murderers*." †. This is plain dealing; calculated to bring down their lofty looks. Agreeable to which you find through the different epistles, that mankind are represented, dead in trespasses and sins—enemies in their minds to GOD—blinded by the god of this world, &c. &c. ‡ But of this we have spoken already. I therefore ask, Why the apostles should unanimously adopt such a method of preaching; and constantly address sinners, in language so fully expressive of their wretched condition, had they not known that *self-confidence* was both a general, and a hazardous principle?

4. I now beg leave to appeal to your consciences as in the sight of GOD. Whether, to be ingenuous, you are not sensible of this as an habitual temper? Are you not inclined to think well of yourselves; and to place a degree of confidence in some circumstances, which you imagine distinguish you from others? Are you not displeased, when attempts are made to debase man; and ready to declare with a certain lawyer, *Thus saying, thou reproachest us also?* § Have you not often thought, and perhaps often said it, That though human nature is depraved, it is not so bad as represented? Do you not think, that man ought to be treated with more respect; and that some pains should be taken to convince him of his importance?

THE
* *Act. ii.* † *Act. vii.* 51, 52. ‡ *Eph. ii.* 1. compared with *Rom. v.* 10. *Colos. i.* 21. *2 Cor. iv.* 4. especially the Text.
§ *Luke xi.* 45.

7. *TOUCHING* the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. So very strict had he been in his obedience to the law, that neither himself nor his brethren could find fault with him.

THIS narrative confirms the observation, *viz.* That mankind make their own righteousness the ground of their confidence. For the very things which the apostle now rejects, had been gain to him before. The same spirit lives, and reigns still. There are crowds of modern Pharisees, who, though they fall far behind *Saul*, as to the privileges of his birth, or the strict manner of his life, are equally self-confident. Among the several things which men are apt to place confidence in, I shall mention the following ;

I. THAT they are *not so bad* as others. All who make this plea, manifest their extreme ignorance of the law of God, and the gospel of CHRIST. Yet such there are. And if we may believe what they say, this negative righteousness, if you will admit the expression, is esteemed a favourable circumstance, on the account of which they expect some indulgence. What a gross absurdity ! This comparative phrase, *not so bad*, carries in it a confession of guilt, at the same time that the sinner would extenuate it. And the guilty, whether the degree of guilt be greater or less, are exposed to damnation. *The wages of sin is death.* * Suppose you should see two criminals arraigned at the bar, the one for high-way robbery, the other for murder ; and the former should plead before the court, as a circumstance entitling him to their mercy, that he was a high-way-man, and not a murderer ; you would look upon such a conduct preposterous ; and be ready to assure the criminal, that the very thing he urged in his own favour, would be the cause of his condemnation.

AND

* *Rom. vi. 23.*

And suppose you should find the same person, while under sentence of death, disposed to speak well of his own character, as differing from that of his fellow-criminal; doubtless you would immediately ask him, what satisfaction could possibly result from a consideration of such difference, seeing he would as surely be executed as the other? Infinitely more unreasonable do those men act, who hope for mercy because they are *not so bad* as others. Sinners, as such must be damned: the law and justice of God call for their execution. What pleasure therefore, can it afford the sinner *now*; or will it afford *hereafter*, to think, that though he is condemned to lie in hell forever, his character is not as heinous as that of other sinners?

2. THERE are numbers whose *good life* is the ground of their confidence before God. Probably they have had a religious education, and have generally conducted with sobriety. And in their dealings with mankind, have carefully adhered to the rules of equity. They have scorned to over-reach, or to keep back the wages of the hireling. Honest and punctual in the payment of their debts. They make no man call twice for his money, unless absolutely necessary; but promise with caution, and perform with punctuality: chusing rather to empty their purses, than to forfeit their word; or suffer a poor man to be impeded in his business, and distressed in his family. To which we add, in order to finish the character, their *extensive liberality*. They are men of great humanity; soon affected with the calamities of others, and ready to relieve them.

THESE men are highly esteemed by others, and useful in the community. We heartily wish an increase of their number. Their general character bears some resemblance to that of *Saul* the Pharisee. And if the approbation of men, would recommend them to God, they would not fail of acceptance.

But after all, it must be said to such, *One thing is wanting*; and which is indispensably necessary, *viz.* To be brought to count this *good life*, and all those things which are *gain* to them but *loss*, for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS the LORD. However strict they may be in their observance of both tables of the law, we may venture to affirm, that they do not exceed *Saul*, who, as touching the righteousness that is in it, was *blameless*. He, like his brethren the Pharisees in the present day, made a righteousness of his *good life*; and entertained no such notions of the Deity, as to suppose He would condemn a man that had so much to say for himself.

3. THERE are others, who make a righteousness of their submission to gospel ordinances; and thus run counter to their original design. Should a strict search be made among the professors of christianity, we have reason to conclude that many would be found, who have no better foundation for their hope, than their having been church-members for a number of years. They can relate the time of their baptism, and of their admission to the LORD's table; but cannot give any clear account of their having been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of GOD's dear Son. Which is an event infinitely more important than the former. They seem to be as ignorant of the new birth, as *Nicodemus*; and are ready with him to say, *How can a man be born when he is old?*

THE principal difference between their plan of acceptance with GOD, and that of *Saul*, consists in this; *Saul* was in the pursuit of eternal life on mere law: they blend law and gospel together. They have been baptised, stately partake of the LORD's supper, keep their place in the house of GOD, pray in their families, do justice between man and man, and sometimes give to the poor. And are so fixed in their confidence in the flesh, that it is next to impossible to persuade them that

that they may be mistaken. He who tells them, that they must have a better righteousness than this ; and that they may lose heaven after their thirty, forty, or fifty years standing in the church, if they have no better plea ; may expect to bring upon himself their displeasure.—Surely they have forgotten the awful parable of the ten virgins ; and that it is written, *They are not all Israel that are of Israel.* * Or, which is more likely, they have so closely wrapt themselves up in their own righteousness ; and for so many years been persuaded of their good estate, that they ward off the most solemn scriptures. And now, the only thing that leaves room to hope for their conversion is, that the residue of the Spirit is with God ; and when he works, none can let it. He can strip them, as he did *Saul*, of all that is now *gain* to them ; and powerfully incline them to cast away all their *round of duties*, in point of dependence, though not in point of performance ; and to glory only in the cross of CHRIST.

THESE are the very men, who have the form, but deny the power of godliness. And who are capable of treating with contempt, the times of refreshing from the presence of the LORD ; those happy seasons, when God is graciously pleased to pour out his Spirit upon the churches. Neither need we wonder, if they become warm in their opposition ; and treat those things as profane, which CHRIST and his *real* disciples esteem *sacred*. For notwithstanding their shew in the flesh, they perceive not the things of the Spirit of God.

HERE you will permit me to take notice of what, I apprehend, is an abuse of the LORD's supper, *viz.* Persons, their hurrying themselves into the church of CHRIST ; or their being hurried by others, upon some slight convictions of sin,
or

* *Mat.* xxv. *Rom.* ix. 6.

on an account of their sober life.—I have met with some, who, upon becoming uneasy, in their minds about the state of their souls, have manifested a very great anxiety to be received into the church. But upon being asked the reason of the hope that was within them, appeared greatly ignorant of their own true character, and of the way of life through CHRIST: having no more to say for themselves, than that they had lived long in the neglect of their duty, and concluded they ought to join the church. And at the same time were incapable of satisfying, either themselves or others, that they had known the truth as it is in JESUS.

QUERY. Is it *kindness*, or *cruelty* to persuade such persons to come up to the ordinances? Should not their christian friends inform them, that a submission to ordinances lays no ground for hope? That they must be born again; and justified freely, through the redemption that there is in CHRIST? By such an act of friendship, they might be instrumental of turning their solicitude to a matter of eternal consequence, Am I in CHRIST? Have I ever been renewed in the spirit of my mind?—This is the grand point, that every person desiring admission to the LORD's table, should previously settle. For it is children's bread, designed for those who have a *good hope through grace*. The privilege is special; intended for believers only. Hence we read, that the LORD added to the apostolic church daily, *such as should be saved*, i. e. real believers, as appears in the context. Such also were the persons who composed the church in *Samaria*. †

BESIDES, the house of GOD is *spiritual*, and said to be built up with *lively stones*. † Now the known character of unbelievers is, that they are *dead* in trespasses and sins. Consequently, are very unfit materials, with which to build this *spiritual house*.

THE

† *AA*. ii. 47. with the preceding Verses. Ch. viii. 12. † *Ps*. iii. 5.

THE church of CHRIST is chosen out of, and entirely distinct, from the world. If therefore all persons of an sober life ; or who may appear to be under serious impressions of mind, are to be admitted into it, it will unavoidably tend to confound the distinction : unless we take it for granted that all such are real christians. This, I imagine; will be consented to by but few. If it should, what becomes of the important doctrine of regeneration ; or the special work of the HOLY GHOST in the conversion of a sinner ? And wherein consists a difference, absolutely necessary to be made, between *morality* and real *christianity* ? For the holy scriptures, and our acquaintance with mankind, unite to convince us, that men may behave with much external sobriety, and seem to be under very serious exercises of mind ; who, notwithstanding, are ignorant of the power of godliness. A deist, who pours contempt on all revealed religion, may conduct unblameably. And many who live under the dispensation of the gospel, like *Felix*, may be made to tremble. Or with *Agrippa*, be almost *perjuaded* to be christians. Or like the stony ground hearers, *receive the word with joy*. All this may be, and the persons remain in unbelief. If so, regeneration is something more than this. It is that work of the Spirit of God upon the sinner's mind, by which his native enmity is slain, the stubbornness of his will subdued, and he brought to believe with *all his heart*, and to rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, having no confidence in the flesh. The divine influence is certainly *felt*, of which, the subject of it is capable of giving some account. Strange, my brethren, that a man should *pass from death to life* ; be delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and know nothing about it ! At least he will know, that whereas he was blind, he now sees. And I humbly conceive, that every candidate for church-membership, should be in good measure

sure satisfied, that he is the subject of this great change. He that can rush into the church, and rest easy without such satisfaction, is in a condition to be suspected.

WILL you therefore bear with me, while I charge you before GOD, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who shall judge the quick and the dead, To be more anxious to fly for refuge to the Hope set before you, than to fly into His visible church? for you may be members of a church, and at the same time heirs of hell.

LET none think that I have a design to discourage the proper subjects, from joining the church of CHRIST. GOD forbid! You yourselves, my hearers, have had repeated opportunities of knowing, that every addition to the church, has added to my happiness. Would to GOD, that converts might come as the clouds, and as doves to their windows!—All I have in view, is to keep out hypocrites and almost christians; and to dissuade awakened sinners from substituting the ordinances of the gospel, in the room of CHRIST, and his righteousness. And such an attempt is necessary; because persons in these circumstances, like a man drowning, will catch at any thing: and have often been known to fly into the church for safety, like *Joab* to the horns of the altar.

S E R M O N II.

The Sinner's best Righteousness proved to
be essentially deficient.

PROCEED to the second thing proposed, which is to shew, that a sinner's best righteousness is essentially defective ; therefore not to be mentioned in point of acceptance with God.

RIGHTEOUSNESS is conformity to a divine rule. This rule is the law of GOD. If therefore our obedience answers to its requirements, it is accepted : if it fails in *one* point, it is rejected.

THAT the divine law is the rule of righteousness, will be readily granted. It remains then, that we enquire into its nature, in order to assist us in bringing our obedience to the trial.

THE law of nature, under which man was in his primitive state, was inscribed on his heart. " That such a law was connate with, and as it were, implanted in the man, appears from the reliques ; which like the remains of some noble building, are still extant in every man ; namely, from these common notions, by which the Heathens themselves distinguished *right* from *wrong*, and by which they were a law to themselves ; *which shews the work of the law written in their hearts*, their consciences bearing witness." *
By this law, man was required to love the LORD his God, with

* Dr. Witsius, in his Oeconomy of the Covenants.

with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind. And as his love was to be *supreme*, so his obedience was to be *perfect*. That man in his state of innocence, was under the most sacred obligations, to love *supremely*, and to obey *perfectly*, none will offer to deny. But alas, he sinned and fell. The effects of this act of disobedience, at least some of them, became immediately apparent. Guilt, fear, and alienation from God, appeared in the behaviour of the apostate pair. Of which their posterity, by virtue of that federal relation they stood in to them, became partakers: * and as fast as the world was peopled, native corruption was propagated. And from this source actual sins proceeded.

AFTER a number of years had elapsed, and the law of nature was almost obliterated, by that flood of iniquity that had taken place, the LORD JEHOVAH issued an edition of the law from mount Sinai, with the most dreadful circumstances. The design of which was to let mankind know, that though they had forgotten their obedience, JEHOVAH had not forgotten his law. Also to inform them, that though they had lost their ability *perfectly* to obey, the divine LAW GIVER had not lost his authority to command. These commands were written on tables of stone, to denote their perpetuity; and deposited in the ark. And though the ark and the tables of stone are lost, the law remains, and will remain so far as it is *moral*, a rule of righteousness. God forbid that we should once suppose, that it has either been abrogated, or relaxed! which would be to reflect upon its adorable Author. Its precepts are transcribed in the new testament. When a Pharisee asked our divine LORD, *Which is the great commandment in the law?* Instead of hinting that it was either relaxed or abolished, He readily replied, *Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, &c. And thy neighbour as thyself.*

On

* Rom. v. 19.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. † Compared with the following words of St. Paul ; *Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet ; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* ‡. In these places, together with those referred to in the margin, there are parts of the moral law insisted on ; which are a plain proof of its perpetuity.

To which I add that memorable passage in *Mat. v.* *Think not I am come to destroy the law and the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.* Here our blessed LORD not only clears Himself of having a design to supersede the law, by the promulgation of his gospel ; but also threatens the persons who shall dare to teach such a sentiment.

As to the nature of this law, which we have proved continues, I would observe,

1. THAT it is *holy*. This it must be, as it is the law of an infinitely holy GOD.

2. IT is *just*. If it is the law of GOD, it must be so ; because He, who ever acts agreeable to the strictest rules of righteousness, would never lay down as the rule of moral action, a law that is unjust in its demands.

3. IT is exceeding broad, reaching to the thoughts, and the intents of the heart. Thus CHRIST explains it ;

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† *Mat. xxii. 34---41.* ‡ *Rom. xiii. 9. James ii. 8, 11.*

Ye have heard that it was said of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. *Note. — A lustful look, is heart-adultery. If a man indulges in heart one secret lust, even suppose it is never actually gratified, such is the nature of this law, that he is deemed, and treated by it as a transgressor. In this the *divine* differs from *human* laws. The latter have nothing to do with thoughts, and only condemn for actions : the former condemns for the sins of the heart. And thus it is necessary it should be, because thoughts are as open to the view of JEHOVAH as actions, and when sinful, are no less abominable. A thorough conviction of the extent of the law, would make a man tremble. Suppose your breasts were transparent, and your thoughts visible ; so that he who sits next to you, could observe all that passes within ; who of you would not shudder ? And would you fear that man should know your secret imaginations ? Tremble then O sinner, for to GOD, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, all things are naked ! Hell is said to be without covering. This then is one of the requirements of the law, even truth in the *inward parts*. A conformity of soul to it in every instance without exception. A want of such conformity, is a want of righteousness ; on account of which the man is condemned by the law.

THE law requires perfect obedience as the condition of life. That is, obedience that is *universal* and *uninterrupted*. Universal ; For *whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in ONE point, he is guilty of ALL.* † Uninterrupted ; for it is written, *Cursed is every one that CONTINUETH not in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* ‡ By this rule our obedience is to be tried, in order to determine, whether we shall stand or fall in consequence of *doing some good thing.*

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* Mat. v. 27, 28. † James ii. 10. ‡ Gal. iii. 10.

The inquiry rests intirely on these two particulars, Are we in *heart*, and in *life*, what the law requires we should be? Are we satisfied before God, that we have a perfect conformity of soul to the nature and demands of his law? Have we never violated the law in heart, by indulging unavuly passions; such as *covetousness*, *revenge*, *pride*, &c. ? If we have swerved in heart from this perfect law, in a single instance, it neither admits repentance, nor accepts sincerity; but condemns us. If so, we are all condemned; for we are all conscious that naturally, we are destitute of this conformity.

AGAIN. Let the sinner examine the obedience of his *life*. Has it been *constant*, since he became capable of distinguishing good from evil? Has he always delighted in the divine law; and never turned aside from the path of duty? Has his obedience been *universal*, to every precept without exception? Has he not failed in one instance? If he has, the living oracles declare he is *guilty of all*. But it is unnecessary to enlarge, seeing every mouth is stopped, and all the world is become guilty before God. Every man knows, that he falls short of the requirements of the law, both in *heart* and *life*. Consequently, his righteousness is essentially deficient.

How unreasonable is it then, for men to introduce works of righteousness done by them, in order to recommend them to God; when his law requires, and will dispense with nothing less, than *perfect obedience* as the condition of his favour; and they themselves, acknowledge, that their obedience is imperfect? Should they not rather fear and tremble, seeing they fall so far short of what the law requires?

OBJECTION. Perhaps it will be said, in opposition to the preceding sentiments, That it would be unjust in God to require more of us, than in our present circumstances, we are able to perform. That the gospel is a "remedial law,"

designed

designed to soften the rigour of the former constitution, and to render the terms of acceptance more easy, by substituting *sincere*, in the room of *perfect* obedience. That JESUS CHRIST died to atone for the imperfections of our obedience ; insomuch that we need not doubt of salvation, if we *sincerely* do as well as we can.

REPLY. The law was given to man, while in his state of innocence, at which time his abilities were equal in every respect to its demands. God required no more of him, than he had power to perform. His present incapacity, is an effect of his sin ; and subsequent to the existence of the law. Consequently it cannot be unjust in God, to require perfect obedience of him, he being now morally unable to yield it ; unless it can be supposed, that with the sinner's loss of ability to perform, the Deity has lost his authority to command. A shocking supposition ! Is not the authority of God over his creatures, invariably the same ; notwithstanding any alterations that may take place in them ? Doubtless. Whose fault is it that we labour under a *moral* inability to yield perfect obedience to the divine law ? Our own surely. Shall we then plead that *impotence*, which is an *effect* of our *wickedness*, as a reason why God should be less strict in his demands ? Suppose you should lend your friend in good circumstances, a thousand pounds, payable at a certain time ; and he should spend his estate at a gaming table, and thereby become reduced to poverty. Would his inability render it unjust in you to demand your money ; or dissolve his obligation, to pay it ? Verily, whatever might be his condition, your demand would be indisputably just ; and his obligation not to be called in question.

MANY things might be insisted on, in answer to the objection, viz. That the gospel, instead of being designed to abate the rigour of the law, reveals a righteousness for the

justification of the sinner, that is in every respect adequate to its requirements. If so, there is no necessity of a relaxation of it. This will be the subject of the next discourse.

AGAIN ; If the law of GOD in its original state, was perfect ; and in every respect consistent with the perfections of the divine nature : such as became a GON to give, and the creature to obey ; how can it be relaxed ? Can it be altered without injury ? Is it possible that it should undergo a change, and yet retain its perfection ?

FARTHER ; If the law admits *sincere* instead of *perfect* obedience, in consequence of the introduction of the gospel ; how comes it to pass, that CHRIST and his apostles taught the perpetuity of the law ; and assure us, that whosoever shall offend in one point, is guilty of all ? More than this it never required.

THE friends of these opinions, " run themselves insensibly," says a late, judicious divine, " into the grossest inconsistency, " They hold that GOD in mercy to mankind has abolished " that rigorous constitution or law, that they were under originally ; and instead of it, has introduced a more mild constitution, and put us under a new law, which requires no " more than imperfect sincere obedience, in compliance with " our poor infirm impotent circumstances since the fall.

" Now how can these things be made consistent ? I would " ask what law these imperfections of our obedience are a " breach of ? If they are a breach of no law that we were ever " under, then they are not sins. And if they be not sins, what " need of CHRIST's dying to satisfy for them ? But if they " are sins, and the breach of some law, what law is it ? They " cannot be a breach of their new law ; for that requires " no other than imperfect obedience, or obedience with imperfections : and therefore to have obedience attended " with imperfections, is no breach of it ; for it is as much

" as it requires. And they cannot be a breach of their old
 " law ; for that, they say, is entirely abolished, and we never
 " were under it.—They say, it would not be just in GOD to
 " require of us perfect obedience, because it would not be
 " just in GOD to require more than we can perform, or to
 " punish us for failing of it. And therefore, by their own
 " scheme, the imperfections of our obedience do not deserve
 " to be punished. What need therefore of CHRIST's dy-
 " ing, to satisfy for them ? What need of his *suffering* to sa-
 " tisfy for that which is no fault, and in its own nature de-
 " serves no *suffering* ? What need of CHRIST's dying, to
 " purchase, that our *imperfect* obedience should be accepted,
 " when according to their scheme, it would be unjust in it-
 " self, that any other obedience than imperfect should be re-
 " quired ? What need of CHRIST's dying to make way for
 " GOD's accepting, such an obedience as it would be unjust in
 " Him not to accept ? Is there any need of CHRIST's dying,
 " to prevail with GOD not to do unrighteously ? If it
 " be said, that CHRIST died to satisfy that old law for us,
 " that so we might not be under it, but that there might be
 " room for our being under a more mild law ; still I would
 " inquire, what need of CHRIST's dying that we might not
 " be under a law, which (by their principles) it would be
 " unjust that we should be under, whether CHRIST had died
 " or no, because in our present state we are not able to keep
 " it ?" † The glaring inconsistencies, which this author has
 judiciously pointed out, I apprehend, can never be reconciled
 upon these principles. I now proceed to the

III^d HEAD, To shew that the sinner, upon his becoming ex-
 perimentally acquainted with the grace of the gospel, is there-
 by led to renounce all confidence in the flesh ; and to expect
 acceptance with God, *only* on account of that *righteousness*
which is through the faith of CHRIST. THIS

† President Edwards, on the Freedom of the Will. P. 158, 159.

THIS observation is contained in, and proved by the text. *But what things were GAIN to me (while a Pharisee) these I counted LOSS for CHRIST (upon my conversion to christianity.) Yea doubtless, and I (do now as a believer in JESUS, and an apostle) count all things (whether birth-privileges, legal observances, submission to gospel-ordinances; zeal, diligence, and fidelity in the ministry, &c.) but LOSS for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, (of all things as explained above; and of all temporal good things, such as the good opinion of his country-men, the way to wealth and preferment, a fixed and quiet habitation; and instead of these he became exposed to bonds, stripes, and imprisonment; yea, and death itself.) And do count them but dung that I may win CHRIST; (who is alpha and omega; the sum total of the christians treasure) And be found in Him (to such there is no condemnation; *) not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of CHRIST, the righteousness which is of GOD by faith.*

THIS passage is plain, and striking. In it St. Paul assures us what his views had been, so long as he remained ignorant of the glorious gospel; and declares in the most explicit manner, that the high esteem he had long entertained for his own obedience, was entirely removed, by an acquaintance with the riches of grace. Observe the pains he takes to explode his own, and to extol the righteousness of JESUS. He views them in contrast, tramples on the one, and glories in the other. The eyes of his mind having been opened, he sees that all his attempts to obtain the divine favour, by a course of obedience, were *loss*; a *loss* of time, and a *loss* of labour: and that if God had not plucked him as a brand from the burning, he should have *lost* his immortal soul!

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* Rom. viii. 1.

It is observable, that he does not only renounce his own righteousness, which he explains as being *of the law* ; but that he does it in the most positive manner, and with a high degree of contempt. “*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss*”—He came to this conclusion, upon the clearest conviction of its truth. In no principle was he more fully established, than that his own righteousness was *loss* and *dung*. Or *dogs meat*, as some chuse to read the latter Greek word. * But the former translation conveys the apostles idea in a more emphatic manner, it being whatever dogs themselves would reject.

In language like this we find the church speaking ; *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.* †—*Rags* are insufficient to cover the body, and to keep it warm : so the sinner's best righteousness is absolutely insufficient to clothe his naked soul, and to secure it from the wrath of GOD, and the curses of his law.—*Rags* are an evidence of poverty : so man's righteousnesses when compared with the law of GOD, manifest that he is poor, and wretched.—*Rags* render a man slighted : so he who appears in his own righteousness, will be set at naught. *Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees,* (such a righteousness was Saul's, for he was a Pharisee) *ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.* ‡

BUT the prophet adds to the phrase, saying, “ all our *righteousnesses* are as *filthy rags*”—How loathsome must he be to you, who appears in *filthy rags* ? Infinitely more so must he appear to JEHOVAH, who introduces his own righteousness, as the ground of his hope and the reason of his acceptance.

HERE, my brethren, you observe an agreement in sentiment, concerning the sinner's righteousness, between a great prophet, and a great apostle. The courtly *Isaiah* does not think

* σκυβαλα. † *I/a.* LXIV. 6. ‡ *Mat.* v. 20.

think it mean, or unbecoming, to use one of the lowest comparisons, when the nature of the subject requires it. In which he is followed by one of the most learned of the apostles.

It is equally obvious in the text, that the same grace which inclined St. Paul to renounce all confidence in the flesh; did also lead him to trust alone for justification before God, to the finished righteousness of CHRIST; *not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of CHRIST, the righteousness which is of GOD by faith.* Note. This righteousness is through the faith of CHRIST, and of GOD by faith. Expressions of nearly the same import. It is of GOD, as he appointed it, and will accept it, as the sole reason of the sinner's discharge from condemnation, and admission to eternal glory.—And it is of CHRIST, as He hath wrought it out; having made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS. †

THE phrase *by faith*, is expressive of the use of faith in the business of justification, viz. That it is *by faith* in the word of God, that the sinner discovers the glory, suitableness and perfection of the divine righteousness; and becomes persuaded that it is an infallible ground for hope; and is thereby influenced to venture his naked soul upon it. This is the righteousness in which the apostle prays to be found, while he peremptorily rejects all other.

THE conversion of St. Paul will readily be allowed to be genuine; and he a pattern to them, who should after him believe in CHRIST to everlasting life. Consequently every true convert will be like minded. Like causes will produce like effects. All who are under the influence of the same grace, will glory only in the cross of CHRIST. And however they may differ in some things of less importance, they will not differ

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† Dan. ix. 24,

in the grand points of the gospel. While they meet in different places for the service of God, worship in different modes, and are distinguished by different names, they are still *one in CHRIST JESUS*: whose supreme wish is to win *CHRIST*, and to be found in Him; counting their own righteousness but *lost and dung*. Such are the discoveries that are made to their minds, by the Spirit of God, of the extent, and spirituality of the law, that they at once find it a *ministration of death*; and that their best obedience will not stand the trial. On the other hand, they have such clear views *by faith*, of the adorable merits of *JESUS*, in their all-atoning virtue, that they rejoice in Him, having no confidence in the flesh.

I PASS now to some practical improvement.

1. HAVING proved the universality, and danger of this spirit of self-confidence, it seems necessary to caution you against it. Nothing, we find, is more natural to man; neither can any thing be more hazardous, than to trust in himself. This spirit, if permitted to govern, will lead you into inconceivable misery; because under its influence you trust to something for acceptance with God, that is essentially wrong; a righteousness that will not bear the trial. And at the same time that you run this dreadful risque, you despise the riches of God's goodness, in providing a better righteousness than your own; and condemn the author of eternal salvation. Such, depend upon it, shall not pass with impunity.

2. FROM the preceding discourse, it is plain in what sense the apostle renounced all works done by him, whether before or after believing; *viz.* In point of *dependence*. He had no intention to teach us that the law was relaxed; or that our obligation to obedience was in any degree weakened. Far be it from him to lead men to treat the divine law with indifference

ference. The point he laboured in his several epistles, with the greatest perspicuity, is to beat men off, not from obedience to the law considered as duty ; but from *trusting* in it for justification, either in whole, or in part. It was no grief to him, that he had lived a sober life ; of this he did not repent : but he repented bitterly, that he had made so great a mistake in the matter of acceptance with God, as to look for the divine favour on the foot of his own *doings*. By this conduct he robbed God of his honour, CHRIST of the glory of his compleat righteousness, and entirely set aside the glorious plan of redemption revealed in the gospel. In the same sense should every man absolutely reject his best obedience. And doubtless he will do it, if he is acquainted with the nature of the law, and the grace of the gospel. As to the law, it condemns for *one* failure ; consequently he who is sensible of thousands in the course of his obedience, will not dare to introduce it as the reason of his acceptance.—And as to the gospel, it reveals a righteousness for the justification of the ungodly, that was wholly finished by JESUS CHRIST ; and which no sinner has any claim to, on account of what he has done, or can do. *Not of works lest any man should boast.* †

3. FROM hence I observe, that the real believer will as fully reject all self-confidence, as open profaneness. A man may turn from swearing, drunkenness, uncleanness, &c. to the profession, and practice of godliness ; and remain at the same time warmly attached to his own righteousness. That very alteration of his conduct, of which he is sensible, and others observe, is a ground of his confidence. He is pleased with it ; and secretly thinks himself better than others. Such were the Pharisees in the days of CHRIST : they looked upon themselves as holy and despised their neighbours. This self-confidence was their bane.

† *Eph. ii. 9.*

I BESEECH you, suffer the word of exhortation. Examine yourselves, whether you have ever been led to count all but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS the LORD? Ye old professors, ye long established christians, are you built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets; JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief corner-stone? Do you rest infinitely satisfied with Him? and is He dearer to you than every other object? Have you been brought to rejoice in the glories of his character, and his spotless righteousness? And are you anxious to place the crown on his head?—Or have you some secret reserve? Do your hearts suggest some plea besides CHRIST? Paul renounced every thing for Him; he had nothing to desire but to be found in Him. May this be your case; may this be mine! For should we hold up both hands against the flagrant vices of the day, and bear open testimony against growing profaneness, and at the same time indulge this self-righteous spirit, we shall finally be placed with the workers of iniquity.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N III.

Imputed Righteousness one of the Glories
of the Gospel.

R O M A N S IV. 6.

*Even as David also describeth the Blessedness of the Man unto
whom G O D imputeth Righteousness without Works.*

✠✠✠✠✠ T. Paul's design in this chapter, and in a great
✠ S ✠ part of the epistle, is to distinguish between
✠ ✠ ✠ justification by the deeds of the law, and by
✠ ✠ ✠ the righteousness of faith. The former senti-
✠ ✠ ✠ ment he had early imbibed, and warmly pro-
moted, till it pleased God to call him by grace. Upon which,
he, with equal zeal and diligence preached the very faith he
had laboured to destroy. The text and context afford us a
striking instance of his alteration of mind, and solici-
tude to propagate his new opinion ; between which, and
the principles of his education there is an evident contrast.
The language of one is, *Do and live* : the other speaketh ex-
pressly, *Abraham believed G O D, and it was counted to him for
righteousness. Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reck-
oned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but be-
lieveth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for
righteousness.* q. d. The labourer is worthy of his hire. What
a man receiveth as an equivalent for his industry, is not of *grace*
but of *debt*. He wrought for it, and may claim it. So, if any
man should insinuate that the sinner is justified before God,
in consequence of good works done by him ; he destroys the
doctrine.

doctrine of grace. And the testimony of *David* is introduced to confirm the important truth ; *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom GOD imputeth righteousness without works.* The authority of *Abraham* and *David* had great weight with many, to whom *St. Paul* was called to preach and write. *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, was justified by faith without the deeds of the law : and *David*, a man after GOD's own heart, and an inspired prophet, describes the blessed man to whom a righteousness is imputed without works ; saying, *Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD will not impute sin.* This quotation is out of *Psa.* 32. The text is *St. Paul's* comment on it ; who, as he was inspired by the same Spirit, must be allowed to understand the meaning of the royal prophet infallibly. So far then is our apostle from treating the doctrine of imputed righteousness as novel, unscriptural, or absurd, that he assures us it was an article of *David's* creed, and taught in the verses he had cited. *David* speaks of the forgiveness of sin, and of its non-imputation ; but does not use the phrase imputed righteousness. *St. Paul* informs us in his exposition of the words, that this is their import, *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD imputeth righteousness without works.* Here we have

I. A righteousness spoken of.

II. Which GOD is said to impute without works.

III. And their blessedness declared, who are justified by this imputed righteousness.

I. A righteousness spoken of.

THE subject of *St. Paul's* discourse is justification in the sight of GOD ; therefore the righteousness he pleads for, is such as is calculated to justify in this sense. In the sequel he carefully

fully excludes the sinner's obedience to the law, from having either part, or influence in the matter; and thereby leaves us but little room to wander in pursuit of his meaning: which must be, either that *our faith* is our righteousness; or *the obedience and sufferings* of CHRIST. The former was the sentiment of *Arminius*, and is still embraced by his followers. To prove which, they repeatedly urge those expressions of the apostle, *being justified by faith; his faith is counted for righteousness, &c.* * In which passages, and others of a like import, I humbly conceive he cannot mean, that a sinner is justified before GOD, by the *act of believing*; or that he is counted righteous because of *his faith*. For

I. THERE is a manifest distinction between *faith*, and that *righteousness* which is imputed for justification. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of CHRIST: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein [i. e. in the gospel] is the *righteousness of GOD* revealed from *faith to faith*."†—That St. Paul here speaks of justifying righteousness, I conclude from the connection of the words with the preceding context. Verse 15. he declares his readiness to preach the gospel to those that were at *Rome* also. Verse 16. he glories in it, and gives the reasons why he does so. Verse 17. he explains the nature of the gospel, viz. That it is a revelation of *righteousness from faith to faith*. This is one of its glories, that it exhibits a righteousness as an article of faith, by which all who believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of *Moses*. The distinction between *righteousness* and *faith* in this Verse is obvious. I therefore observe, If a sinner is justified before GOD by *righteousness imputed* to him, he cannot be said to be justified in the same sense by *faith*, which the apostle so carefully distinguishes from it.

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* Rom. iv. † Rom. i. 16, 17.

2. THAT righteousness by which a sinner is justified before GOD, is *perfect conformity* to the divine law. The law is the rule of righteousness ; by which JEHOVAH both condemns and acquits the sinner. If his righteousness, be it *personal* or *imputed*, answers to the demands of the law, justice is satisfied. If it fails in a single instance; the sinner is condemned. *If thou wilt enter into life, i. e. by virtue of thine own obedience, keep the commandments. * For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them. †* Who then will say, that *faith* is such a conformity ? or that the LAW GIVER will depart from his just requirement of *perfect obedience* as the condition of life ; and instead thereof accept *faith* ?

3. THE scriptures when speaking of *justification, pardon, remission*, &c. ascribe them to CHRIST ; to his *obedience, blood, righteousness*, &c. but *faith* is properly the work of the HOLY GHOST in the soul. “ No internal work of the HOLY GHOST, though in this our present state, it were most absolutely perfect, so as to exclude every thing of sin, could be any part of that righteousness that must justify us before GOD. To suppose that it could, would be manifestly to confound the offices of the Redeemer, and of the HOLY GHOST. It was CHRIST that was to merit for us ; the HOLY GHOST was never to merit for us. It was not the HOLY GHOST that died for us, nor can his operations or productions in us, have any *causative influence* to the meriting the justified, and accepted state of any person before GOD. They cannot make us *never to have sinned* ; nor can atone for *our having done so*.—Suppose we a person, as soon as he is converted made perfectly free from sin, that very moment, by some extraordinary powerful work of the HOLY GHOST on his soul, how shall that expiate for

* Mat. xix. 17. † Gal. iii. 10.

"for his having been a sinner?" * Agreeable to this writer, whose words are, according to truth, he that says, we are counted righteous before God, on account of *our faith*, ascribes that to faith, or to the HOLY GHOST, who is its great Efficient, which properly belongs to CHRIST; and thereby confounds their offices, which are clearly distinguished in the word of God.

4. THE sacred writings in many places militate against, yea fully overthrow this notion, "That God accepts us as righteous in his sight, on account of *our faith*." A cloud of witnesses stand ready to vindicate the truth. We are said to be *justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST*. † If "*through the redemption that there is in CHRIST*," then not for *believing*.—The same apostle says, the sinner is *justified by his blood*. ‡—If by the blood of CHRIST, then not by *faith*.—CHRIST is called *The LORD our righteousness*; § and said to be made of God unto believers, *righteousness*. ** The reason of which expression is, that CHRIST is the author of a compleat and spotless righteousness, by which all who believe are justified. It follows that if CHRIST is the sinners righteousness, *faith* is not. I add but one passage more: *For as by one man's disobedience many were made, (or constituted) sinners: so by the obedience of One, shall many be made righteous*. †† If a sinner is made righteous in the sight of God, which is St. Paul's sense here, by the obedience of CHRIST, then he cannot be said to be accepted as righteous on account of his *faith*. Which leads me to observe,

5. THAT when the apostle says we are *justified by faith*, he does not mean the *act of believing*, as proved above, but probably the *object* believed in; even JESUS CHRIST, who is

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* *Howe's Carnality of Religious Contention.*

† *Rom. iii. 24.* ‡ *Rom. v. 9.* § *Jer. xxiii. 6.* ** *1 Cor. i. 30.* †† *Rom. v. 19.*

the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth. May not the expression be metonymical? We find in the sacred writings that *sin* is put for the *punishment* of it.* CHRIST is put for his own doctrine. † *Hope* is put for the *GOD* of hope. ‡ By the same figure *faith* may be put for its *object*.

OR his meaning may be, that the sinner is *justified by faith*, as faith apprehends that righteousness, which is revealed in the gospel; and is the only matter of justification. *By faith* he understands that there is an infinitely excellent, and suitable righteousness, finished by JESUS CHRIST; and which God will accept. Which consists,

I. OF obedience to the precepts of the law. That CHRIST was made *under the law*, and perfectly obeyed it, is admitted. The present inquiry is, Whether his obedience to the law, is any part of that righteousness which is imputed for justification? Or whether sin is pardoned, and the sinner accepted by GOD, on the account of the death of CHRIST *alone*, exclusive of his obedience to the precepts of the law? In answer to which I would observe,

(1.) THAT it appears that the obedience of CHRIST through his life is a part, and a very essential part of the sinner's justifying righteousness; seeing He undertook as a *Surety*, or in his behalf, to *magnify the law, and make it honourable*; § agreeable to *Isaiah's* prophecy concerning Him. For this purpose He was made *under the law*, even that *He might redeem them that were under it, and that they might receive the adoption of sons*.** In this passage the apostle first declares his incarnation; then the condition in which He was, *viz. Under or subject to the law*; and subjoins the reason of this subjection to the law,
or

* *Levit. xxiv. 15.* † *2 Cor. xi. 4.* ‡ *Psa. lxxi. 5.* § *Isa. xlii. 21.* ** *Gal. iv. 4, 5.*

or the end He had in view ; that *He might redeem them that were under it*. Every person, while unregenerate, is under the law, both as to the *obedience* that it requireth, and the *punishment* that it threatneth. He who appears as a Surety for such ; or undertakes to deliver them, must fully answer these demands. That is, He must perfectly obey its precepts ; as well as fully endure its penalty. Without such full satisfaction to the law, it cannot be said to be magnified and made honourable. And upon this it is that the sinner, to whom it is imputed, is accounted righteous in the sight of God.

(2.) " THE reward of life is promised not to suffering, but to doing ; the law says, do this and live ; it promises life not to him that suffers the penalty, but to him that obeys the precept." ' There never was a law,' as an excellent divine † observes, ' even among men, either promising or declaring a reward due to the criminal, because he had undergone the punishment of his crimes.' " CHRIST's sufferings and death being satisfactory, to the comminatory, or threatening part of the law, are imputed to us for justification, that so we may be freed and discharged from the curse, and hell, and wrath. But these as they do not constitute us righteous, do not, properly speaking, entitle us to eternal life ; but that active obedience, or righteousness of CHRIST, being imputed to us, is our justification of life, or what gives us the title to eternal life." *

THE distinction made by this author between CHRIST's obedience to the precepts of the law, and his *sufferings and death*, with their different influence, is countenanced by the holy scriptures ; and that too in several places. Paul writing to the *Galatians*, ascribes our redemption from the curse

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† Dr. Goodwin. * Dr. Gill's Doctrine of Justification, P. 25, 26. To whom the Writer acknowledges himself indebted for two or three Hints enlarged on in this Part of the subject.

to the death of CHRIST. * *Peter* corroborates the sentiment, by saying that we are *redeemed* by the blood of CHRIST. † But when the apostle speaks of our being made *righteous*, he ascribes it to *righteousness* imputed, and to *obedience*. Which is the particular next to be considered.

(3.) ST. Paul assures us in the plainest terms, That we are made righteous by the *obedience* of CHRIST. *By the obedience of One, shall many be made righteous.* ‡ The apostle speaks in this chapter of Adam and CHRIST as two public heads. Adam, by *actual disobedience* involved himself, and all his posterity, whom he represented, in an awful scene of guilt and wretchedness. JESUS CHRIST, who was another public head, has made many righteous by his *actual obedience*; even all those who were given to Him by the Father. The latter sentence is in opposition to the former; and gives us its true meaning. For as Adam's *disobedience* to the law, constituted him, and his posterity sinners; so the *obedience* of CHRIST to it, is that by which many are constituted righteous. That the apostle in this place does not mean one act, but a course of obedience, may be learnt by comparing it with the following words, "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became *obedient unto death*" §—Or "*until death.*" Meaning that He was *obedient* to the precepts of the law through all his life, from which He was not diverted until He became a sacrifice for sin. The obedience of CHRIST is the subject of the apostle's discourse in both places; in one he assures us that it was the business of his *whole life*; in the other, that by that *uninterrupted course of obedience* many are made righteous.

2. I PASS now to observe, that this law having been violated by man, became a *ministration of death*. He thereby fell under

* Gal. iii. 13. † 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. ‡ Rom. v. 19. § Philip. ii. 8.

under its curse, from which there was no way of deliverance, but by an adequate satisfaction, offered to the divine LAW-GIVER. Hence it came to pass that a law, which, in its original state required obedience only ; now called for suffering. He who broke it, contracted guilt, for which neither men nor angels could atone. If he could from this time forward to the end of life, perfectly keep the law ; as it would be no more than mere necessary duty, it could not expiate the guilt of one sin : any more than the punctual payment of debts that shall be contracted for the future, will satisfy the creditor for those that have been contracted in time past. The guilt of sin is infinite, rising in malignity, in proportion to the dignity of Him against whom it is committed. Consequently the atonement must be infinite. It is so. For God hath laid help on One MIGHTY TO SAVE. * *Through Him is preached unto us the forgiveness of sins. † We have redemption through his BLOOD : ‡ that BLOOD that was shed for the priesthood, and for the congregation ; and without the shedding of which there could be no remission.*

THAT the guilt of sin was to be expiated by *blood*, is a doctrine of the old testament ; from whence it is no less evident, that JESUS CHRIST was to be the sacrifice. We are abundantly taught the doctrine of atonement, by the numerous sacrifices of the law ; some of which were very significant ; and which St. Paul in his epistle to the *Hebrews*, accommodates to the great Antitype. That qualification of the victim, that it should be without *blemish*, is typical of the spotless purity of JESUS, the LAMB without *blemish* and without spot. § His death with its circumstances and design, are all expressive of CHRIST our passover who was *sacrificed for us*. The death was violent, so was the death of CHRIST. The blood was received

* *Isa.* lxiii. 1. — *Heb.* vii. 25. † *Acts* xiii. 38. ‡ *Ephes.* i. 7.
§ 1 *Pe.* i. 19.

received into a basin, to denote a value in it, not real but typical. This blood was to be applied either by sprinkling, or a touch to the person to be cleansed; in allusion to the all-atoning efficacy of the blood of CHRIST, called the *blood of sprinkling*, and said to *cleanse from all sin*. The imposition of hands on the beast, with large confession of sin, carried in it the doctrine of *imputation*: or the transferring of guilt to CHRIST; agreeable to the words of the prophet *Isaiah*, *The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.* * The design of these sacrifices was to make atonement. † These beasts were substituted in the room of the people; and their blood shed for the expiation of their sin. So JESUS CHRIST put Himself in the place of the heirs of promise; and though He knew no sin, GOD made Him to be sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of GOD in Him.

AND now should we turn to the new testament, we shall immediately observe it written as with capitals, "He died the JUST for the UNJUST, that *He might bring us to GOD.*" "He is the PROPITIATION for our sins." By which we are not only taught that He died, but that He died as a *Substitute*. Guilt was laid upon Him—"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." ‡—"He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." § Evident it is from these, and many other passages of scripture, that CHRIST did not only die as a Martyr, to confirm the doctrines He had taught; but as a Substitute, in the stead of others; and that his sufferings were primarily intended for the expiation of the guilt of sin.

THAT He was perfectly innocent, is allowed by all; yet we behold Him dying as one of the worst of Malefactors, the cursed and painful death of the cross. Suffer on his own account

* *Isa.* liii. 6. † *Exod.* xxix. 36. --- *Levit.* xvi. 27, &c.
‡ *Isa.* liii. v. § *1 Pet.* ii. 24.

count he could not, because He knew no sin ; neither was guilt found in his mouth. Neither could He have suffered at all, if He had not been charged with guilt ; it being incompatible with the justice of GOD, that the perfectly innocent should suffer. It will therefore follow, that guilt was laid upon Him ; that He was made sin for others. Or as an apostle expresses it in the strongest terms, " He was made a CURSE for us." *

To sum up this head ; I apprehend we are to understand, by the *righteousness* which is spoken of in the text, nothing less than the perfect obedience of CHRIST to the precepts of the law, together with his sufferings and death. With it the Father is well pleased. It is perfect, spotless, and everlasting. It has infinite dignity ; *being the righteousness of GOD*. It may be so called, because finished by Him who is GOD as well as man. Who *thought it no robbery to be equal with GOD*. And who, notwithstanding he appeared in the form of a servant, was possessed of infinite glory and perfection. Many striking circumstances proclaimed his glory, when He was crucified, and extorted from an enemy this frank confession, *Truly this was the Son of GOD*. † And which was afterward declared, according to the Spirit of holiness *by his resurrection from the dead*. By this event his deity was proved, and the truth of his important doctrines sealed. So that now it appears infinitely safe, to make this glorious righteousness the ground of hope.

II. I PASS to consider, That GOD is said to impute this righteousness without works.

THE use of this phrase has given great offence to some, who, it is probable, were desirous of rejecting the doctrine with it. But why we should reject the word *imputed*, rather than the word *righteousness*, is not easily accounted for ; unless it may be

* Gal. iii. 13. † Mat. xxvii. 54.

be thought, that mankind know that there must be a *righteousness* in order to acceptance with GOD; but are unwilling that it should be an *imputed righteousness*, because that necessarily cuts off all boasting. Men are fond of *personal*, and therefore try to obscure *imputed righteousness*. It is however sufficient to countenance the use of this phrase, that we have it in our text; and find it several times repeated in this chapter; and in other passages of holy scripture. We observe,

1. THE person to whom this act of imputation is ascribed, GOD. On which we may remark, that there is a concurrence of the sacred persons of the Trinity in the work of redemption. The righteousness was finished by the Son of GOD; it is imputed by the Father; and a discovery of it to the soul as the reason of divine acceptance, is made by the HOLY GHOST; who takes of the things of JESUS and shews them unto us. The act of justifying, is else where ascribed to the Father. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of GOD's elect? It is GOD that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died.** Here is a manifest distinction between *GOD that justifieth*, and *CHRIST that died*. The sinner by the violation of the law, became obnoxious to the divine wrath: CHRIST undertook for him, and satisfied divine justice. GOD the Father being well pleased with his righteousness, pronounces the sinner justified. He acquits him from every charge, *because CHRIST died*. And at the same time that the sinner is acquitted, the Saviour is approved; because the sinner is discharged on the foot of the Saviour's merits.

2. THE manner in which the sinner is justified is expressed, viz. By *imputation*.—"GOD *imputeth* righteousness."—The sense in which we are to understand the phrase, may be learnt in the context. The apostle assures us that *GOD justifieth the ungodly*. Verse 5. This is their character at the very time when

* Rom. viii. 33, 34.

when God justifies. If so, they have no personal righteousness, and consequently cannot be accepted by Him for any thing that is properly their own; it follows that it must be on account of the righteousness of another. By *imputation* here therefore we are to understand, the placing that to one, that properly belongs to another. *enig* JESUS CHRIST was perfectly innocent; He had no sin either of nature, or of practice. Yet guilt was so laid upon Him, or imputed to Him, that He became responsible to the justice of God; and it is said that He bore it in his own body on the tree. Though He was the LAMB without blemish and without spot, He was crucified on *Calvary* between two thieves. His sufferings could not be on his own account, because He was innocent, and therefore must be on the account of others. In the same way is a sinner discharged by his righteousness.

THOUGH no transactions among men, can fully illustrate the doctrine before us, the following instance may be admitted as bearing some resemblance. A bondsman is frequently accepted in the behalf of a debtor. Now the debt that was contracted, was not his personal act; nevertheless it becomes his by voluntarily putting himself in the debtor's place; and the creditor accordingly looks to him for payment. So it is in this case. The sins for which CHRIST died were not his own personal acts; but became his by a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's stead; and by the act of the Father, his laying them on Him.—On the other hand, the payment made by the bondsman, was not the personal act of the debtor; yet it is so viewed by the creditor, that the debtor is released. So the righteousness of JESUS, is not the personal obedience and suffering of the sinner; yet it is so accounted his, that he is discharged from condemnation, and shall be finally admitted to glory. This illustration, which has

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often been introduced by the lovers of this doctrine, tends in a degree to explain it. And seeing CHRIST is called *The SURETY of a better testament*,* there appears a propriety in this use of it. A *Surety* is one who appears in the behalf of another.

I SHALL only subjoin in order to prove the doctrine of imputation, the following ever memorable passage, *For as by one man's disobedience many are made sinners: so by the obedience of One, many are made righteous.* † It has been quoted before, but not with the same design. Now the sense of the apostle in these words, is plainly this, That the righteousness of CHRIST becomes the sinners, in the same way that *Adam's* sin becomes chargeable to his posterity; and that is by being derived, or reckoned to them.—It at least deserves a serious answer, How many could be made righteous by the obedience of *one*, if that obedience is not placed to them? Or how CHRIST's obedience should avail a sinner, especially in so high a sense, as that he shall be discharged from guilt, and accepted as righteous in the sight of God, if it is not *imputed* to him?

OBJECTION. It may be said, If CHRIST both obeyed the law, and suffered its penalty in the behalf of his people; that they have nothing to do with it. For as by his sufferings and death, they are freed from condemnation; so by his perfect obedience, they are dismissed from obligation to obey it. To which I reply;

THE sinner can be freed from the law only agreeable to the design and engagement of his Surety: no farther than He engages for him, can he be benefited. Now the scripture expressly declares, that the design of CHRIST in becoming a Substitute, was to procure a deliverance from the law, so far as it tended to *condemnation*. "CHRIST hath redeemed

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* Heb. vii. 22. † Rom. v. 19.

us from the *curse* of the law." Agreeable to which it is said, He was made *under* it, that He might *redeem* them who were *under* it. This is the current language of the new testament. Hence observe, that the intention of JESUS CHRIST was to deliver his people from the *curse*. Evil is ever involved in the idea of a deliverance. We do not say, that a man is delivered from that which is good, but only from something that is *pernicious*. Now as obedience to the law, is no evil, or part of the *curse*; consequently it is what the sinner stood in no need of a salvation from. The language of the law, as has often been observed, is, *Do thyself no harm*. The deliverance therefore which the justified obtain by CHRIST from the law, consists in these two things;

(1.) A FREEDOM from *condemnation*. The sinner having transgressed the law, was condemned by it to lie under the wrath of JEHOVAH, in an eternal exclusion from heaven. From this awful calamity, all the justified are delivered by the interposition of the divine Redeemer. In accomplishing which, it was indispensibly necessary, that He should both obey the law, and endure its penalty.

(2.) THEY are freed from the law as a covenant of works: hence they do not expect eternal life upon the foot of their own obedience. Accordingly the apostle Paul says, *You are become dead to the law by the body of CHRIST*. Again, *But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*. They were dead to it, so as no longer to seek to be justified by the deeds of it; or to look upon their obedience as a condition or term of their acceptance with God; because by the deeds of the law could no flesh living be justified.

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HENCE we observe, That as this was the extent of the design of CHRIST, even to deliver from the law only as it tended to *condemnation*, the justified are not delivered from it as a rule of life : any more than they are delivered from corporal death by his dying.

COULD it once be made to appear, that these sentiments are subversive of obedience, it would immediately characterize them ; and prove that they ought to be rejected. But so far are they from this, that they establish it. St. Paul having discoursed at large, on the doctrine of justification without the deeds of the law, asks the question, *Do we then make void the law through faith ?* i. e. the doctrine of faith. And then answers it with an emphatic *GOD forbid : yea we establish the law.* † As to the threatening and precepts of the law, what has been said already proves that it is established with respect to them : seeing the death of CHRIST was according to the sentence of the law, and his obedience to its precepts perfect. To which we add, that it is established with respect to all who have been brought to believe in the Son of God. They look upon it as the rule of life : to which they are bound to pay a sacred regard, from love to God, whose law it is ; and who gave his only begotten Son, that He might become the end of it for righteousness : from love to JESUS, who both obeyed its precepts, and suffered its penalty, and thus delivered the criminal : and from love to the law itself, as it is a transcript of the divine nature. Their obedience is truly evangelical, originating from *that faith* which is *of the operation of GOD* ; and accompanied with *that love*, which is *a fruit of the Spirit*.

3. THERE is one thing more to be considered before we proceed to the next head, viz. That this "righteousness is imputed *without works*," i. e. without works in him who is the

† Rom. iii. 31.

the subject of justification ; or to whom the righteousness spoken of is imputed. The obedience of the sinner is no cause why God justifies him. Neither is it any part of that righteousness by which he is justified. Justification is an act of the pure, sovereign grace of God, exercised toward sinners and ungodly. The design of this phrase *without works*, is to exclude every thing from the matter and cause of justification, but the perfect righteousness of CHRIST. I proceed

III. To consider the blessedness of such, to whom this righteousness is imputed. *Blessed are they, whose iniquities are forgiven; and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD will not impute sin.* * The blessedness spoken of, may be comprised in these three things,

I. A FREEDOM from the wrath to come. If sin be pardoned, there is no condemnation. And this, my brethren, is the immensely rich blessing, which God bestows on all to whom righteousness is imputed.—*He pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage : He retaineth not his anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy.* † The exceeding greatness of this blessing may be more fully discovered, by a consideration of that misery to which sin has exposed us. *Hell, damnation, everlasting torments*, are words that convey most shocking ideas. And thus saith the LORD, *The wicked shall be turned into hell ; with all the nations that forget GOD.* ‡ *They that have done evil shall come forth to the resurrection of damnation* §—*And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.* ** Thus you see that the wages of sin is death, yea eternal death ; consisting, not in a loss of being, but of happiness. It is nothing less than a banishment from God, and all the glories of his kingdom into the bottomless pit ; there to be confined with devils and damned spirits, without the

* Rom. iv. 7, 8. † Micah vii. 18. ‡ Psa. ix. 17. § John v. 29.

** Mat. xxv. 46.

the least glimpse of hope ! This wretchedness is inconceivable as to its degree ; consequently is inexpressible. How great then must be their blessedness, whose iniquities are forgiven ; seeing they obtain an absolute deliverance from all this. And,

2. ARE entitled to the enjoyment of GOD in heaven. These are connected in one verse, " That they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me." * GOD pardons none but such as he intends to admit into his everlasting kingdom. The connection between the several blessings of the well-ordered covenant, is inseparable. " Whom he did predestinate, them He also called ; and whom He called, them He also justified : and whom He justified, them also He glorified." † They are pardoned and sanctified, on purpose that they may be received into the presence of GOD and of the LAMB, where is fulness of joy. Oh infinite felicity ! There is the absence of all evil, and the fruition of all good. JESUS CHRIST will there be beheld in all his dazzling glories, while all the hosts of angels bow before Him ; and the spirits of just men made perfect unite in one grand ascription of praise to Him, who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his blood ! Glory be to GOD, for this astonishing display of his grace ! That these inestimable blessings may be conferred on guilty, hell-deserving men !

3. I WOULD add, That GOD blesses those whom He justifies, with a comfortable sense of their own interest in Him ; which the scriptures call *good hope through grace* : the *full assurance of hope*, &c. A privilege for which they are indebted to the Spirit of GOD, who is said to *seal* the believer unto the day of redemption :—To witness with his Spirit that He is a child of GOD :—To abide in his heart as the *earnest* of his inheritance. ‡ In which places it is clearly taught us, That believers, at least, some

* Acts xxvi. 18. † Rom. viii. 30. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 5. Ephes. i. 14.---Rom. viii. 16.

some of them, are favoured with a sense of the pardon of their sins through the blood of CHRIST. The HOLY GHOST witnesseth to their spirits that they are the children of GOD, and thus confirms the wavering, doubtful mind. He is also said to be an earnest of their inheritance. The design of an earnest, which is a part in hand, is to ascertain the whole. So the Spirit of God, at times, enables the believer as He did St. Paul, to say, *I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.** Thus He rejoices in the prospect of the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And at times is ready to say, *Why tarry the wheels of thy chariot?* Verily, blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. I now proceed to some

REFLECTIONS.

I. LET us from hence learn to distinguish between faith, and the righteousness of CHRIST, in the great affair of acceptance with God. That righteousness which justifies, is altogether the work of CHRIST. It was finished by Himself; and is properly his own. He had no co-adjutor. He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him. Nevertheless it becomes ours, by the gracious act of God imputing it to us.

FAITH, according to the beloved disciple John, and the great St. Paul, is the belief of the truth; † the believing that JESUS is the CHRIST; ‡ or a giving credit to the record that GOD gave of his Son. § These definitions of it are all of the same import, and all divine; given out under the inspiration of the Spirit of God: and not to be contradicted by any, however some have glossed upon them, till they have brought

* 2 Tim. i. 12. † 2 Thes. ii. 13. ‡ 1 John v. 1. † Verse 10.

brought in a sense diverse from the inspired writers. This faith, when it is *real*, as distinguished from that uninfluential assent to the gospel, which crowds who hear it, profess to have; is an effect of the *divine influence in us*: hence, said to be of the operation of GOD;* and that "it is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."† As the righteousness by which the sinner is justified, is the sole work of CHRIST for him, so this is the work of the HOLY GHOST in him, and no less necessary in its proper place; it being that, without which a sinner cannot apprehend, receive, and rest upon CHRIST for eternal life. By faith, as before observed, he becomes acquainted with the glories of the character of JESUS, the fulness of grace in Him, and the suitableness and perfection of his righteousness: in consequence of this faith, he admires the Saviour's personal excellencies, flies to Him, ventures all upon Him, and rejoices in Him. These, to speak plainly, are all so many effects of faith. The sinner must have a view of the Saviour's excellency, *before* he will admire it. He must be persuaded, that CHRIST is the only safe refuge, *before* he will fly to Him. He must know that there is in CHRIST, sufficient matter of consolation, *before* he will rejoice in Him. Of all these he is entirely satisfied by faith in the testimony of GOD: subsequent to which is his coming, or flying to Him, trusting in, or venturing all upon Him, rejoicing in Him, &c. e. g. Joseph's brethren heard that there was corn enough in Egypt, they believed the report; this was faith: upon this they went down for a supply. Doubtless this was an effect of their faith; for had they not believed the tidings, they would never have gone. So, a sinner must believe that CHRIST is a full, and a compleat Saviour, *before* he will run, or fly to Him. Sense of misery, and faith in his sufficiency, are the main stimulus. Or, I am sick, I hear of an able physician, I believe him to be so, upon which I apply to him. My appli-
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* Colos. ii. 12. † Rom. x. 10.

cation to him, and my *belief* of his character, are as distinct as any two things can be. My *trusting* my life in his hands, is an effect of my *believing* him to be an able physician. This distinction is obvious in the sacred writings, as well as in the nature of things : " He that *cometh* to God, must *believe* that He is." * Here is a manifest distinction between *coming* and *believing*.

I APPREHEND that the same distinction should be observed, between *believing* in CHRIST, and *receiving* Him. If so, it will follow, that " to receive CHRIST in all his offices, as a prophet, a priest, and a king," is not properly *faith*, but an *effect* of it ; and inseparably connected with it. It is certain that a man must believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, and that He sustains these offices, before he can, or will receive Him in this light. " CHRIST came to his own (meaning the Jews) but his own *received* Him not." † This refusing to *receive* Him was not unbelief, but an effect of it. Hence should you be asked, Why they did not receive Him ? The answer is ready, *Because* they did not believe Him to be the CHRIST.—Nothing is more plain, than that unbelief was the grand *cause*, why they rejected Him. On the other hand, nothing is more evident, than that *receiving* CHRIST, is an effect of *believing* in Him. And should you ask the man who defines faith, " a receiving CHRIST in all his offices," Why he thus receives Him ? he himself will be obliged to observe this distinction ; for the only just answer he can give you is, *Because I believe* He sustains them."

THUS we see that faith is entirely distinct from the righteousness which justifies ; at the same time it is indispensably necessary, answering great, and good purposes. Under its influence the sinner *flies* to JESUS the Hope set before him ;

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and

* Heb. xi. 6.

† John i. 11

and trusts his immortal interest in his hands; being perfectly satisfied with his adorable character. Faith is also the medium of peace and consolation. You may with equal propriety attempt to separate light and heat from the sun, as peace of conscience, and joy in the HOLY GHOST, from the faith of GOD's elect. The degree of christian consolation may be greater, or less, according to the strength and influence of faith. At one time the believer may have an inward peace and tranquility, which is exceedingly agreeable. At another time he may be favoured with what St. Paul calls *joy unspeakable and full of glory*. At another, guilt may rob him of his comfort, and separate between him and his GOD. Such are his exercises in the present state of things. But he is far from making a righteousness of his *frames, feelings, or experiences*. The distinction between these he well understands. The *righteousness* by which he expects to be justified, is the work of CHRIST alone; the *faith* by which he is enabled to receive it, is of *the operation of GOD*; the consolations that he enjoys are from this glorious CHRIST, in believing; or through faith. All as different as A, B, and C. His dependence for acceptance with GOD, is neither on his faith, nor experiences, but on CHRIST *alone*. At the same time he cannot conceive it possible, for a poor, wretched, undone sinner, to be enabled to believe in CHRIST for eternal life, and not *rejoice*. A view of the glories of his person, and the fulness and freeness of his grace, cannot fail of introducing *strong consolation*.

COROLLARY I. It follows, that believers may still talk of, and plead for *christian experiences*, without the least injury to the "finished work of CHRIST." Or without making a righteousness of them; seeing they clearly understand the distinction between them: notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, by some who have lately appeared among us.

COROL.

COROL. 2. Those persons that have ever known the truth, as it is in JESUS, must fall into an awful state of supineness, before they dare affirm, as a term of admission into any religious society, that all their former acquaintance with religion, was *delusion* : and by so doing, they cannot fail of grieving the Holy Spirit of GOD.

COROL. 3. That faith that is without a heart-felt sense of the truth ; or unconnected with the consolation that there is in CHRIST, is essentially different from the faith of the apostles and primitive christians : *Believing, they rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

COROL. 4. They who seem to speak highly of the atonement, or the " finished work of CHRIST ;" but say little, and indeed nothing to the purpose about the Spirits work in regeneration ; while they appear to extol one sacred Person of the Trinity, do manifestly slight another.

2. FROM the preceding subject we are taught the antiquity of the doctrine of imputation. Which was clearly expressed under the former dispensation, by the laying of hands on the head of the victim, with confession of sin. Yea, we are taught that the doctrine of *imputed righteousness*, is not to be confined to the new testament. For St. Paul in his exposition of the words of David, assures us that it is held forth in them. It was a doctrine of the primitive church, and much insisted on in the reformation from popery. Luther, that resolute reformer, looked upon it " an article of a standing, or a falling church." It was steadily embraced by the fathers of *New-England*, and is preserved as precious in many of their writings. And however it may at any time suffer an eclipse ; as a truth of GOD, it shall finally prevail to his glory, and the comfort of many poor sinners. Doubtless it is calculated to do both. It gives glory to GOD : for is this method of saving the

the guilty, there is an illustrious display of the divine perfections. Such as, wisdom, love, grace, sovereignty, justice, &c. Wisdom shines, in that God has secured the honour of his law and government, while He justifies the *ungodly*. Love appears in the manner in which He hath done this, even by giving his only begotten Son to suffer and die. Grace is conspicuous in his pardoning the sinners guilt, and accepting his person as righteous on account of the *obedience of One*. Sovereignty is manifested, in his having mercy on whom He will have mercy.—Justice cannot be hid, seeing rather than sin should be pardoned without satisfaction, the Son of God must die.

It brings comfort to the sinner who is brought to believe in JESUS. For he sees that He is the author of a perfect, spotless righteousness ; such as he finds he must have, or never be admitted to see the LORD. And while he rejoices in it by faith, he ascribes the whole glory to God.

3. If only they are blessed whose iniquities are forgiven, it follows, that the wrath of GOD abideth on all the impenitent and unbelieving. This is an alarming consideration to such, as have any sense of the nature of the divine displeasure. It will be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD. *Who can dwell with everlasting burning ? Who can dwell with devouring fire ?* A state of guilt is awful ; the person in it, is destitute of the comforts of the gospel here, and is liable every moment to be plunged into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone ! And this is the condition of every natural man. It becomes each of us to say in the language of the disciples, *LORD is it I ?*

S E R M O N I V.

Believers exhorted to continue in their
Obedience.

PHILIPPIANS II. 12. 13

Wherefore my Beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my Presence only, but now much more in my Absence ; work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

For it is GOD who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.

✠✠✠✠✠ T. Paul was a zealous, and an accomplished advocate for all the important doctrines of christianity. These he inculcated with plainness and frequency, always laying them down as the foundation of obedience ; and from them urging a sacred regard to every necessary duty. We have an instance of this sort in the context. The apostle introduces subjects of the highest consequence, viz. The divinity of CHRIST, or his equality with the Father ; *Who being in the form of GOD, thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD.* His astonishing condescension ; *but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.* His course of obedience to the will of God ; and his submitting to the ignominious, and painful death of the cross. These grand, interesting truths, are the premisses on which he founds the following exhortation ; *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence ; work out your own salvation with*

with fear and trembling. For it is GOD who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. q. d. Deatly beloved, I exhort you to labour to be like your LORD and Master; let the same mind be in you, that was in Him: behave with meekness and humility toward all men; and let it be seen that you delight in copying the most perfect example. And as JESUS became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; know ye, that the great design of this stupenduous act of his, was, that He might redeem you from all iniquity, and purify you to Himself, a peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. Be ye therefore, like Him, obedient until death: stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD. In farther speaking to the words, I propose,

I. To shew to whom they were addressed.

II. INQUIRE into their meaning.

III. CONSIDER the necessity of the believer's continuing in his obedience.

I. It is expedient in the first place, to know to whom these words were spoken. This should be a first inquiry, in all our investigations of divine truth, in order to find out the sense of the sacred writers. The want of a due attention to this maxim, has led many to mistake their meaning. From hence it is that many scripture exhortations are misapplied; and the text among others: which is manifestly spoken to believers. This will appear from the following things;

I. THE direction of the epistle. "To all the saints in CHRIST JESUS, who are at *Philippi*, with the *bishops* and *deacons*." * The direction of a letter gives one man a right to open it, rather than another; and without any regard to its contents, determines whose it is. So in this case. St. Paul carried on a very extensive literary correspondence. If any thing in

* *Philip. ii. 1.*

in providence, prevented his paying a personal visit to the places, where he had been successful in preaching the gospel, he generally took care to write to them. This circumstance more immediately gave rise to his several epistles; which are so many religious letters, written to the churches, or to particular persons, on matters of importance. Each letter is directed with the greatest care; the epistle to the *Hebrews* excepted, which is generally supposed to have been written by this apostle. Now it is from the direction, that we judge for whom the contents are designed. Accordingly we are led to conclude, that this epistle to the *Philippians* was intended by the inspired author, for *believers*, because he directs it "to all the *saints* in CHRIST JESUS."

2. In confirmation of the above remark, it is necessary to examine the contents of this letter, from the beginning to the text. I might with propriety transcribe the whole preceding part of it; but shall only select a few passages, because they are sufficient for the purpose.—*Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of CHRIST.* * Here he expresses his confidence that the *good work* which had been begun in them, would be *finished* by the same divine Agent. To whom could such a passage be addressed, but to professed believers? He also speaks of their *furtherance and joy of faith*. † Sure we are that such as have no *faith*, can neither expect its *furtherance*, or experience its *joy*.—He does not hesitate to tell them, that to them "it was given—to believe in CHRIST." ‡ All which exactly agree with the direction of the epistle.—To which I will only add the text; *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence*—Observe that the apostle files the persons to whom he writes, *beloved*; an expression only used by him, when addressing *believers*. Accordingly, after the conversion of *Onesimus*,

* Philip. i. 6. † Verse 25. ‡ Verse 29.

sinus, he wrote a letter to his master *Philemon*; in which he exhorts him to receive him, "not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother *beloved*." §

He also commends their course of obedience, both while present with them, and in his absence from them; by which it became manifest, that the gospel had not come to them *in word only*, but *in power*, and the *HOLY GHOST*, and much assurance. I proceed

II. To inquire into the meaning of the apostle in this exhortation; *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*.

I. I APPREHEND the apostle cannot mean, that salvation from the guilt, and fatal effects of sin, was to be wrought out by human endeavours. Or that the salvation of a sinner from the wrath to come, depends on any thing that he can do. Consider the Being that is offended, the law that is violated, the guilt that is contracted, the circumstances of the offender, and the whole tenor of the gospel.—The Being whom we have offended is the infinite JEHOVAH; a GOD of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is He. To Him all our sins are naked; which the eternal holiness of his nature, obliges Him to view with abhorrence. While his justice, another essential attribute, calls for condign punishment: and which could never have been impeached, if He had damned the world of men, as He has the world of apostate angels. Because men have violated a law, which is infinitely just and reasonable; the requirements and threatnings of which, are perfectly equitable. As a murderer is justly condemned to suffer death, so every transgressor of the divine law, becomes as justly liable to be punished with everlasting destruction.

REFLECT on the nature of his crime, or the guilt that he hath contracted. We judge in common, of the nature of an offence, by the dignity of him, against whom it is committed.

Should

Should we admit this rule here, it will follow that sin has in it infinite guilt, because committed against an infinite God.—Infinite it must be also, seeing an infinite punishment is assigned to the impenitent and unbelieving. As the punishment is, which a most righteous Being has determined to inflict, such must be the crime : otherwise the penalty exceeds the offence ; which would be an act of injustice. This no man dare to insinuate of the JUDGE of all the earth, who ever has done, and ever will do right.—That the punishment to be inflicted on sinners, will be infinite, is manifest through the whole scriptures. It is said, *the worm dieth not* *—*the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever* †—*the wicked shall go into EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.* ‡ In the same Verse St. *Matthew* declares, that the *righteous* shall go away into *life eternal*. It is readily granted, that *eternal life* in this place, intends endless felicity ; or is to be taken in a strict and proper sense. Why EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT, which is an antithesis to it, should not be taken in a like sense, that is, to import an unlimited duration, no probable reason can be assigned. We find the evangelist makes use of the same word § in the original, to express both the duration of the punishment of the wicked, and the happiness of the righteous ; thereby informing us, that the *eternity* of the one, is commensurate with the *eternity* of the other ; meaning that it is without end.—Seeing therefore that a most just God would never inflict a penalty, that exceeds the nature of the crime ; and has in this case declared that the finally impenitent and unbelieving, shall be punished with an infinite punishment ; it follows that the guilt of sin is infinite.

CONSIDER the requirement of the law, even perfect obedience. Nothing less will be accepted as a condition of the divine favour, if we are to enter into life upon this principle.

I

BEAR

* *Mark* ix. 44. † *Rev.* xiv. 11. ‡ *Mat.* xxv. 46. § *Alzvi* 6.

BEAR in mind the circumstances of the sinner. He is in a state of moral impotence ; destitute of all moral rectitude ; yea dead in sin.

THUS you find, that an infinite GOD is offended, by the violation of a law, holy, just, and good : that the sinner has thereby contracted infinite guilt, and is reduced to a state of absolute poverty and wretchedness ; while the law curses every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of it, to do them. What can this poor creature do, in order to work out a salvation from such guilt as this ? Can he make atonement for one of the offences that he hath committed ? or satisfy divine justice for the violation of the law ? Wherewith can the sinner, in such deplorable circumstances, expiate infinite guilt ? Men and angels are unequal to the task ; and JESUS CHRIST alone, MIGHTY TO SAVE.*--ABLE TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST. †

SURELY St. Paul better understood that gospel, which he received by the revelation of JESUS CHRIST, than to address a sinner, poor, and blind, and naked, in such a manner. First tell him that he can do *nothing*, and then exhort him to do *every thing*. Paul was not such a preacher. He assures us that it is by *grace we are saved, through faith* ; and that *not of ourselves* : it is the gift of GOD. ‡ *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, (be they of the law or of the gospel) but according to his own PURPOSE and GRACE, which was given us in CHRIST JESUS, before the world began.* §

2. NEITHER can the apostle mean by this exhortation, that salvation from the guilt of sin, is wrought out partly by CHRIST, and partly by the sinner. Or that the sinner is to do what he can, in expectation that CHRIST will make up the deficiency.

* Isa. lxiii. 1. † Heb. vii. 25. ‡ Ephes. ii. 8. § 2 Tim. i. 9.

ciency. This sentiment is no less contradictory to the whole gospel, than the preceding; for it teaches us, that CHRIST is not a compleat Saviour; and that our own arm, in part brings salvation. It reflects grossly on the Redeemer, as though He was not every way able to save. And affords the sinner something to boast of before GOD. For suppose that part to be ever so small, that he can perform, still it is a part; and for so much as he can do, by way of atonement for his sins, he may take the praise to himself.

BESIDES, what sort of a righteousness, suppose ye, must that be, that is wrought out *partly* by CHRIST, and *partly* by the sinner? The former, an infinitely perfect Being; the latter, a totally polluted creature. It would bear some resemblance to *Nebuchadnezzar's* image, the parts of which it was impossible ever to unite.

AGAIN; The work of salvation was finished by CHRIST, and He had ascended to the glory of his Father, before these *Philippians* had heard the gospel. Nothing remained, when *Paul* went to preach to them, but the special application of its ineffimable blessings. Accordingly, he took the greatest pains to persuade them, that all their own righteousness was *lost and dung*: and however warm he was in his exhortations to obedience, he would always have them to know, that salvation was *alone* of CHRIST.

FARTHER; The persons to whom the words were immediately spoken, were believers; and at that very time in a state of actual justification. *By him all who BELIEVE are justified from all things.* *—They could not therefore, with any propriety, be exhorted to do something, by which they *might be justified* before GOD.

3. NEITHER are we to suppose, that *St. Paul* designed by this

* *Act* xiii. 39.

this exhortation, to teach these believers, that by virtue of a stock of grace already received, they were to persevere till they should obtain final salvation. This would contradict all those passages of holy scripture, which declare a believer's weakness in himself, and his dependence on CHRIST the only head of influence, for *constant* supplies of grace. His having been enabled to believe in the Son of GOD, does not render him self-sufficient. Still, if left to himself, he may fall foully, like *David* and *Peter*. It is not in consequence of any degree of grace already received, that the believer shall safely persevere to eternal glory; but by virtue of a vital union to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, out of whose fulness he is said to *receive and grace for grace*. * This important, and comfortable sentiment, is beautifully taught us by our divine LORD, by the metaphor of the vine and its branches. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches.* † Observe, CHRIST first introduces the simile, and then accommodates it. *q. d.* It is thus between me and you. I am the vine, to whom ye as branches, are united. The branches are united to, and one with the vine: so ye are united to me, and one with me.—The branches, by a full supply of sap from the vine become fruitful: so ye, being continually supplied with grace, out of that fulness, which it hath pleased the Father should dwell in me, bear much fruit.

THIS sentiment is confirmed, by numerous passages of scripture. CHRIST assured his disciples in the same chapter, that *without Him they could do nothing*. Without his abiding in them by his Holy Spirit; and their abiding in Him by faith, they could do nothing comfortably, successfully, or acceptably. Their consolation is in CHRIST, and if left by Him, they drag on heavily like *Pharaoh's* chariots, when they had lost their wheels.—Their successful opposition to the world

* *John* i. 16. † *John* xv. 4, 5.

world, the flesh, and the devil, is owing entirely to help from CHRIST. *In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him who loved us.* * And the acceptance of their persons, and their obedience, is only through CHRIST. He is the sole medium of access to GOD, and of acceptance with Him ; *wherein He hath made us accepted in the* BELOVED. †

BUT without multiplying quotations, I observe, That the latter part of the text, militates against any such exposition of it. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* For it is GOD who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.—No exhortation could be better guarded. The apostle with his usual caution, takes care that a false construction might not be put on his words ; and that the people, to whom he writes, might not receive any wrong impressions. Instead of being self-confident ; or of thinking that as *believers*, they were amply furnished already for the duties, and trials of the christian life, he exhorts them to continue in obedience, *with fear and trembling.* Fear is often brought in by this apostle, as a necessary temper of mind for the christian, while he abides in the flesh ; because he has many enemies. It was expedient that these, and that all believers should be diffident of their own abilities ; and fear to trust in themselves. No persons are in so great danger, as they are who apprehend none : or who look upon themselves sufficient to overcome every enemy. This remark is exemplified in *Peter's* denial of his master. Had he entertained this necessary fear, it might have kept him from the place of danger. Being suspicious of himself, he would rather have chosen to stay a little behind, than to go among the servants of the high priest.

THE believers at *Philippi* had also reason to fear, lest animosities, and divisions should take place among them, to the great injury

* *Rom. viii. 37.* † *Ephes. i. 6.*

jury of the cause of CHRIST—Lest they should be beguiled by false teachers, who were then lying in wait to deceive—Lest they should be overtaken by temptation, or led away by their own corruptions, to sin against the LORD—And lest they should be found to entertain a fondness for their own righteousness; all which would tend to hinder, or marr their course of obedience.

THE apostle adds, *For it is GOD who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* This sentence is explanatory of the former part of the text; and immediately calculated to unhinge the *Philippians* from self-confidence. *q. d.* I do not mean to set you to do something, by which you may be justified, either in *whole*, or in *part* before GOD; this is the sole work of JESUS. Nor yet would I have you to think, that as believers, and justified persons, you are already furnished with grace, sufficient for all the duties and trials that are before you. Rather, *you are not sufficient of yourselves, to think any thing as of yourselves: but your sufficiency is of GOD,* who worketh in you to will and to do those things, that are spiritually good.*—The apostle does not say, *Who hath wrought in you*, but *who now worketh in you*, as the called according to his purpose.

HERE we are plainly taught, that a *will* to chuse, and the *ability* to perform that which is good, are of GOD. The sinner, while in unbelief, is an enemy in his mind by wicked works; and continually under the influence of a principle of enmity against GOD. He sees no excellency in CHRIST, no beauty in holiness. The things that suit his depraved taste, are infinitely opposite to the divine Majesty: if he therefore gratifies himself, he must offend the Deity. In this condition he acts freely, chusing such things as are adapted to his corrupt mind. And in this manner would he continue to act to the end of life, however shocking the event; if GOD should

* 2 Cor. iii. 5.

should not stop him in his career, as he did *Saul*, the persecutor ; or convert him as He did the dying thief. For nothing short of the exceeding greatness of that power, that brought again from the dead, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, is sufficient to alter this depraved heart. * And even after the sinner is enabled to believe in the Son of GOD, such is the law in his members ; such the power of indwelling corruption, that the will is frequently embarrassed, and spiritual desires languid. Every christian knows by experience, that he is too apt to forget his first love, and to drag on heavily from one duty to another. The world and the things thereof, tend to divide his heart and affections. At such a time he is sensible what his duty is, and he attends to it ; but he is conscious of a sad alteration in the temper of his mind ; which he bewails in language like that of *David*, *My soul cleaveth to the dust : quicken thou me according to thy word.* † He finds that he cannot quicken himself, nor remove this stupidity under which he groans : was it in his power, it should soon be done. But he feels, that it is GOD who worketh in him, by his Spirit and grace to will.—And from the same source is his ability to do, whatever GOD calls him to. *I have learned*, says St. Paul, *in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound : every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.* But lest the *Philippians* should think he contradicted the doctrine he had before taught them, he adds, *I can do all things through CHRIST who strengthneth me.* ‡ That is, by implication, I can do none of these things, without help from JESUS.—He tells us in another place, *to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.* § From hence we learn, that what St. Paul here writes to the *Philippians*, was a matter of his own experience, as well as a solemn truth. IT

* *Ephes.* i. 19, 20. † *Psa.* cxix. 25. ‡ *Phil.* iv. 11, 12, 13. § *Rom.* vii. 18.

IT may now be asked, If neither of the preceeding articles, is the sense of the text, what does he mean? I answer,

4. THAT it appears to me, that his design is to stir up the believers at *Philippi*, to a sacred regard to those duties he had been speaking of in the context; and besides these, to all the duties of the christian life: Or, in other words, as they had always obeyed, not as in his presence only, but much more so in his absence, he exhorts them to continue in their obedience, by studiously observing those things that *accompany* salvation. *q. d.* As ye have always obeyed, so *continue* to obey: remembring that it is *GOD* who *worketh* in you.—While you are careful to attend to the *external* plan of duty that is before you, bear in mind that your sufficiency is of *GOD*; and let this be your encouragement, that He *worketh* in you; and that his Spirit is given to help your infirmities.

THE immediate reason of this exhortation, and which confirms the above exposition of it, you have in the three verses that follow the text. *Do all things without murmurings and disputings*: meaning all the things that he had mentioned in the context, and that are included in the text; such as, that they *should be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.* That *nothing should be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, each should esteem other better than themselves.* That they *should not look every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.* That they *should cultivate a mind like that, that was in CHRIST JESUS*, i. e. of humility and condescension. Having particularly mentioned these duties, he sums up the whole of christian practice in this short exhortation; *work out your own salvation*—And then proceeds to give the reason of it; *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of GOD without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world: holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice*

rejoice in the day of CHRIST, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Here the apostle tells us in the most plain terms, why he so warmly exhorted the believing *Philippians* to obedience. Not that they might recommend themselves to God, and obtain the pardon of their sins; this being a thing impossible by any human endeavours: but that they might be blameless and harmless, as became the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. They were among a people who were in opposition to the gospel, and watched for their fall; the apostle therefore exhorts them to behave in such a manner, that these their enemies might have nothing to lay to their charge. This he urges by the consideration, that christians should *shine as lights in the world*. As God had shined in their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of his own glory, in the face of JESUS CHRIST; so it became them to be as lights to others, in all holy conversation and godliness. *Holding forth the word of life*—Meaning that the bishops or ministers of the gospel, who are mentioned in the direction of the epistle, should preach the doctrines of CHRIST, which are the *words of life*, in plainness and purity; and that both they, and all the saints and faithful in CHRIST JESUS of a private character, should *hold forth*, or publicly exhibit the excellency of these doctrines, by a holy and exemplary behaviour; *shewing out of a good conversation their works with meekness of wisdom*. Such a conduct would have given the apostle occasion to *rejoice in the day of CHRIST*, and have made manifest, that he had *not run in vain, neither laboured in vain*.

It being now apparent from what has been delivered, that the text is an address to believers, urging them to continue in their obedience; I pass to consider

III. That such obedience is indispensibly necessary. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly*

ly, that they which have believed in GOD might be careful to maintain good works : these things are good and profitable unto men.* And in verse 14th of the same chapter, the apostle adds, *And let ours also learn to maintain good works for NECESSARY USES, that they be not UNFRUITFUL.*

LET it be premised, that the plan of a believer's obedience is very extensive. He is bound to obey every moral precept, to imitate every divine example, and to submit to all CHRIST's new commandments. This is manifest in the commission CHRIST gave to his disciples,—*teaching them to observe ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU.* † This is a part of the gospel-ministry; and to be frequently insisted on. Yea, as often as the gospel is preached, it should be urged, that they who have believed in GOD, should carefully *observe all things whatsoever CHRIST hath commanded.* Which is necessary,

1. To evidence their faith in Him. *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works : shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my FAITH BY MY WORKS. Thou believest that there is one GOD ; thou doest well : the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD ? A vain man indeed is he, who pretends to be a believer in CHRIST, but at the same time has no regard to practical godliness. The faith of GOD's elect is a principle of life and action. And every man, who is brought to believe the important doctrines of christianity, will also be influenced to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts ; and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world.* † This, says St. Paul, *that very grace that bringeth salvation teacheth.* It is by their fruit we are to know them ; for they shew their faith by their works : living faith being invariably an influential principle. It may therefore be concluded

* Titus iii. 8. † Mat. xxviii. 20. ‡ Titus ii. 12.

concluded with the greatest propriety, that all who profess to have faith, and have not works, deceive themselves and the truth is not in them. In all such instances, faith lacks its external evidence.

2. OBEDIENCE is an evidence of love to GOD. *He that hatb my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. . . If any man love me, he will keep my words.** He that loveth CHRIST, will be inquisitive to know, and anxious to do his will. There is no incentive so powerful as love. That obedience that springs from it, is both chearful and extensive. A servant may be awed by fear, or induced by the promise of a reward to obey his master : but there is a great difference between such obedience, and that which springs from love. In the former case, he has no true satisfaction in obeying ; but wishes his task was ended : in the latter, there is real pleasure. The servant loves his master, and therefore he loves to please him. His obedience is no task or drudgery, for his heart is in it ; and while he pleases his master, he gratifies himself. It is thus with believers : the love they have to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, makes them willing to do and suffer his will. And where this evidence is wanting, love should be suspected.

3. OBEDIENCE is necessary on account of the men of the world : of this the apostle speaks in the context. And exhortations of the same import, are numerous in the word of GOD : such is the following, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven.†* These words were immediately spoken to the disciples, of whom all manner of evil was falsely said. CHRIST exhorts them to free themselves from these unjust reflections, by a holy, and unblameable conduct. And so to make it evident, that the doctrines they preached, were in no sense unfriendly

* *John. xiv. 21. 23.* † *Mat. v. 16.*

friendly to morality. For while they preached the gospel, and were careful to maintain good works; they left no room for any to insinuate, that they made void the law. On the contrary, their good example might have a tendency, to lead their very enemies to think favourably of the sentiments they taught; seeing, that under their influence their practice was unblameable.

ON the same account, modern christians should be careful to regulate their conduct, by the most excellent maxims of JESUS CHRIST. Thus will they adorn the doctrine of GOD their Saviour; and they who are of the contrary part will be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of them. *

4. CHRIST taught his disciples the necessity of obedience, that GOD might be glorified; *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.* † The glory of GOD should be a leading point with the christian. He should keep it in view as the ultimate end of all his actions; and readily do, or suffer any thing, by which GOD may be glorified. And seeing this end is answered, by having his fruit unto holiness, how should the consideration of it excite him, to give all diligence, to add to his faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity? ‡ And at the same time that GOD is glorified, by his bearing much fruit, he appears to be a disciple indeed; *so shall ye be my disciples.* That is, so shall it be made manifest. For their fruitfulness does not “constitute them disciples; but makes it appear that they “are so. Just as good fruit does not make the tree good; the “tree is first good, and therefore it brings forth good fruit; “but shews it to be good.” So men are known to be the real

* Titus ii. 7, 8. † John xv. 8. ‡ 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7.

real followers of JESUS CHRIST, by abounding in the fruits of righteousness.

5. **THOUGH** the plan of redemption was so laid, that the sinner should be justified through the blood of JESUS, without the deeds of the law; the LORD had respect unto obedience, and effectually secured it. To this men are *chosen, redeemed, and called.*

(1.) **THEY** were chosen to holiness *here*, as much as to happiness *hereafter*. That very purpose of the eternal mind, that appointed them to obtain salvation, did also determine that they should be an obedient people. *According as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY, AND WITHOUT BLAME, before Him in love.** With which agree the following words, **ELECT according to the fore knowledge of GOD the Father, THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT UNTO OBEDIENCE** † In these passages, it is evident beyond a reasonable contradiction, that the heirs of promise are chosen to holiness here; or to a life of obedience to their divine Master. It is therefore necessary.

COROL. How evidently do they misrepresent the doctrine of election, who say, "If we are elected we may live as we please;" seeing the elect are appointed to be a *holy people*?

(2.) It was one great design of CHRIST in redemption, that the redeemed by his blood should be holy. *Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and PURIFY TO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.* ‡

(3.) For the same purpose, they are effectually called by the Spirit of GOD. *For we are his workmanship, created in*
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CHRIST JESUS unto GOOD WORKS, which GOD hath before ordained that we should walk in them. And it is the character of those, who are openly in CHRIST by conversion, that they are new creatures; old things pass away, and behold, all things become new.†*

THUS we see that GOD the Father appointed his people to holiness; JESUS CHRIST redeemed them that they might be holy; and they are called unto holiness by the divine Spirit: they are a *peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.*

6. LET it be farther observed, That the LORD hath wisely connected the christian's growth in grace, and his consolation, with his obedience. If he desires to enjoy, as doubtless he does, the consolation that there is in CHRIST; then he must walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the LORD. This is the divinely appointed method of nearness to GOD; and in which only, the believer can expect to have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST. Hence such sacred promises as the following; *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, &c.‡ Seek and ye shall find.*— And CHRIST said unto his disciples, *That where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.§* Here He promises, as in many other passages, that He would be with, and bless those who wait upon Him; or seek Him in the ways which He hath appointed. And which the faithful in CHRIST JESUS have often experienced. *For the LORD meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness; those that remember Him in his ways.*** Neither hath He ever said to the seed of Jacob, *Seek ye me in vain.* It is therefore necessary that the christian be diligent in his course of obedience, if he would enjoy the comforts of the gospel.

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* Eph. ii. 10. † 2 Cor. v. 17. ‡ Isa. xl. 31. § Mat. xviii. 20. ** Isa. lxiv. 5.

7. THE glory to be revealed, is promised only to such who shall persevere to the end. *He that shall endure to the end shall be saved.* * This is the grand encouragement to believers under manifold temptations. Their trials shall have an end; and then such as shall have finally persevered, shall receive a crown of life. Not that we are to suppose, that our persevering in duty, gives a right to eternal life, no; this is founded on the Redeemer's obedience and sufferings. But it characterizes those, who are the heirs of this inheritance. There are many, who once made a very showy profession, and did run well for a time; but having no root in themselves, endured for a while: for when tribulation or persecution arose because of the word, they were offended. Thus their proper character was discovered. Of such it may be said, *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.* †

ON the contrary, such as persevere to the end, answer the character given to those, who shall forever inherit the promises. And the word is plain, that none but such shall be saved. It therefore becomes all men, professing godliness, to be diligent, that they may be found of CHRIST in peace, without spot, and blameless. ‡ For in the present circumstances, there are many things that unite to excite the christian's fear. He has a law in his members, a tempting devil, and an alluring world: three very potent adversaries. It becomes him continually to watch and pray, lest he should fall from his own steadfastness.

8. IN fine, the love of CHRIST lays the believer under a most agreeable necessity, to continue in his obedience. No obligation more binding than this. The believer reflects on that

* Mat. xxiv. 13. † 1 John ii. 19. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 14.

that supereminent expression of the love of God, in giving his own Son to die for sinners : he thinks with wonder, and affection, of the Saviour's grace and compassion; that He should so readily become a sacrifice for sins : and with an apostle he exclaims, *Herein is love ; not that we loved Him, but that He loved us ! GOD commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us !* He saves from hell ; from everlasting misery, to the eternal fruition of Himself in glory ! In this Redeemer, says the christian, I see a ground of hope for me ; and trust that I have been enabled to fly to Him, as the only Refuge. To him I dedicate my all. I have nothing but I would freely give Him. Oh that he would make my duty plain, and help me to discharge it ! I would gladly make haste, and delay not to keep his commandments ; seeing this is the only way I have to express my love to Him. Thus the love of CHRIST constraineth him. I pass to some suitable

IMPROVEMENT.

1. IT appears repugnant to the sense of this text, to insist upon it as an exhortation to unbelievers. The same may be said of a long catalogue of sacred passages, which have been frequently crowded into addresses to the unregenerate, in order to excite them to do their part, with a promise that CHRIST will make up the deficiency. A mistake that might have been prevented, by a proper attention to such texts, with their connection. *To whom were they spoken ? and with what design ?* are questions necessary to be answered, if we would understand the meaning of the inspired writers. But detached passages of scripture, without respect to their connection and design, are introduced to prove, what every man pleaseth.—Should you attend to the above maxim, in reading the bible, I am persuaded you would think differently, of many passages in it. St. Paul's words to the Ephesians, *Wherefore He saith,*

Awake

Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and CHRIST shall give thee light ; * are repeatedly urged as an exhortation to unbelievers. But it is plain, that the apostle there writes to believers : to such the epistle is directed ; and to such only, are its contents in general applicable. And in the exhortation itself, he carefully distinguishes between believers and unbelievers. The persons addressed, are such as *sleep*. Real christians are too apt to *sleep* as do others. It is said of the wise, as well as of the foolish virgins, " they slumbered and slept." These he calls upon to *awake and arise from the dead* ; the *dead* as distinguished from those who *sleep*. By this phrase the condition of unbelievers is expressed ; they are *dead* in trespasses and sins.—In many other instances, it would be easy to shew from their connection, that they are misapplied ; but this subject is too copious for the improvement of a discourse.

It may now be asked, Whether unbelievers are not to be addressed ? Doubtless they are. The gospel is to be preached to every creature ; † for faith comes by hearing. What is it to preach the gospel ? is the grand inquiry. Does it consist in assuring sinners, " That CHRIST has finished his part of redemption, and that now what remains on their part, is " to comply with the terms and conditions of the new covenant ?" Here the sinner will be naturally led to inquire, if he has any concern about the matter ; What are these conditions ? Perhaps it will be said, Faith and repentance. He may still ask, In what sense are these, conditions ? An Arminian will tell him, that they are so in a proper sense. That his compliance with these, will give him a right to spiritual blessings. For the conditions of a covenant, are those parts of it, that are to be performed by the party, or parties covenanting, in order that he, or they may have a right to the thing covenanted for. Does not this representation of the gospel, manifestly destroy

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* Eph. v. 14. † Mark xvi. 15.

the grace of it ? For if its blessings are only conferred on such, as have a *right* to them, by virtue of their own *compliance* with certain *conditions*, where is grace ? If you employ a labourer, he agrees on his part to work so many hours in the day ; and you on your part agree to give him such a sum of money. Is it an act of *grace*, or is it not rather an act of *justice* in you, to fulfil the condition on your part, when he has fulfilled his ? So, if the blessings of the gospel, are bestowed *conditionally*, it follows, that he who has performed the *conditions*, may *demand* them. How will this correspond with being *saved and called, not according to our works ; but according to his own PURPOSE AND GRACE* ?—It may be said, That it is grace in GOD to confer such immensely rich blessings, on such *easy terms* as faith and repentance. But according to these sentiments, the way to heaven by the gospel, is as hard to fallen man, as by the law ; because the *terms* (as they are called) are equally impossible to him ; by means of his universal depravity. Hence said our LORD to the *Jews*, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.* * And the apostles teach us that faith is the GIFT of GOD : † and that CHRIST is *exalted to GIVE REPENTANCE*. ‡ By these expressions, they lead us to understand that faith and repentance, are as much blessings of the new covenant, as remission of sins ; and as freely given. Surely the *blessings* of the covenant, are distinct from the *conditions* of it.

THAT faith and repentance are indispensibly necessary ; or that the sinner, agreeable to the œconomy of redemption, cannot be saved without them, is not to be contradicted. This is the divine constitution. Faith and repentance are connected with eternal life ; and make up a great part of the gospel-ministry. But their being *necessary*, by no means supposes

* *John* vi. 44. † *Eph.* ii. 8.---*Philip.* i. 29. ‡ *Acts* v. 31.

poses that they are *conditions*, in the sense above explained. For effectual calling, pardon of sin, justification, and sanctification, are all *necessary*; therefore, upon the same principle, they are all *conditions*.

BUT however consistent, the men of these sentiments are with themselves; such as profess to befriend the pure doctrines of grace, appear to be guilty of a glaring contradiction, in the use of this mode of expression. Which has often been the subject of severe animadversion, in order to shew, that their system of doctrines can never be reconciled. At one time, say some, we are told that all men are naturally at enmity with GOD, and dead in sin; that they, as such, are morally incapable of doing any thing toward their own recovery to the divine favour; that faith is of the operation of GOD; that CHRIST has finished salvation; that it is altogether of grace; and that the application of its blessings is made to the soul, by the Spirit of GOD.—At another time the same persons tell us, That faith and repentance are the *conditions* of the new covenant; and that in order to have a *right* to the blessings, we must *comply* with these. Here is a contrast. Man dead in sin can *do nothing* toward his own recovery;—yet man dead in sin must *comply* with *terms* and *conditions*, in order to his being accepted.—Faith is the gift of GOD; at another time, it is something within the power of man. At one time it is said, CHRIST hath brought in an everlasting righteousness, which by a gracious act of GOD, is imputed to the sinner for justification; at another time, he must do something to entitle him to the blessings, &c. Thus do some men catch at every inconsistency, with a design to overthrow the doctrines themselves.

IT may be said, That these phrases are some times used in a good sense; *viz.* That faith and repentance are those things, *without which*, according to the gospel constitution, a sinner cannot

be saved. This is a truth, that must be allowed ; but are not the phrases very exceptionable ? Do they not want an immediate explanation, in order to remove, or prevent that false notion of the gospel, which they are calculated to encourage ? May not the necessity of faith and repentance, be insisted on with as much zeal, and much greater propriety, by the use of other expressions ? The *preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.* *

THE inquiry again returns, How are unbelievers to be addressed ? I answer for myself ; That as their conversion, is the great point in view, every method should be pursued, that seems calculated to accomplish it. Now the sinner is alienated from GOD ; in a state of total depravity ; and as a transgressor of the law, he is every moment exposed to its curse. He who wishes to be instrumental of the conversion of such an apostate, must first try to convince him of his proper character. The method adopted by the apostles, was, to set before sinners the law of GOD, in its extent and spirituality, for their conviction : *for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* † By the law they become sensible, that they are in a state of condemnation ; that their own obedience, when compared with that rule of righteousness, is essentially deficient : and under such conviction, are made to cry out like St. Peter's hearers, *Men and brethren, what shall we do ?* Thus the letter killeth, i. e. the law. It consigns the sinner over to eternal destruction.

ON the other hand, the gospel should be preached to mankind universally. CHRIST should be exhibited in the dignity of his person and characters ; in the greatness of his love ; in the infinite virtue of his atonement, as matters of faith.—The following is an epitome of the gospel, given by JESUS CHRIST

* *Eccles.* xii. 10. † *Rom.* iii. 20.

CHRIST Himself ; For **GOD** so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. In the same manner his apostles preached. They tell us, that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound—That there is redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace ;—That **GOD** can be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in **JESUS**. Thus in a variety of instances, they propose the grand encouragement ; and set **CHRIST** forth, as the precious object of faith and love.

BUT after the clearest exhibitions of the divine law ; the most solemn declarations of the glorious gospel ; the most evangelical discourses concerning the nature, and necessity of faith and repentance ; and the most proper, and pathetic addresses to the consciences of men, which by all means should be made use of ; there will be no success attending them, unless the Spirit of the **LORD**, takes of the things of **JESUS**, and powerfully applies them to the sinner's mind. Paul planted, and Apollos watered : but **GOD** gave the increase.—But as soon as the truth is brought home to the sinner's conscience, he becomes anxious to flee from the wrath to come. His dangerous condition alarms him ; for he now finds that he is condemned by the law of **GOD**, and shut up under an awful load of guilt. And while this conviction of his wretched circumstances, excites him to search the scriptures, to attend the preaching of the gospel, and to cry, *LORD be merciful to me a sinner* ; he can find no encouragement, unless he is under a great mistake, from any thing but the **GOSPEL** ; which reveals a fountain open for sin, and for uncleanness ; a perfect and an everlasting righteousness, which is brought in by **JESUS CHRIST** ; who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. And upon his being enabled to believe in this divine Redeemer, he sees

a ground of hope for him; and rejoices in CHRIST without confidence in the flesh.—Under such a conviction of the truth, and thus inquisitive about the way to Zion, glad should I be to see this, and every congregation in *New-England*. For if a man is not convinced, that he is condemned by the law; he will not rejoice, that salvation is brought to light by the gospel. If he is not sensible of his want of righteousness, he will not esteem it good news, that GOD *justifies the ungodly*. May the Spirit of GOD convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment !

2. I shall conclude this discourse by observing, that there are two classes of men, whose general conduct is incompatible with their professed sentiments.

(1.) THE first of these, are such as plead warmly for the dignity of man in his present state; his noble powers, and capacities; and the influence of his obedience in recommending him to the Deity: but at the same time are guilty of the most fordid vices. They swear on every trifling occasion, by the awful name of GOD; indulge themselves in drunkenness, uncleanness, &c. Thus while they try to persuade us, of the dignity of man; their own conduct, which is much more persuasive, leads us to conclude, or confirms us in the conclusion, that he is an enemy to GOD in his mind by wicked works. No person can degrade them, so much as they degrade themselves.

(2) THE second sort are they, who are very sound in the faith, and very careless in their lives and conversations. You will scarce be able to discover a single error in their creed; but you may easily find thousands in their practice. Of this class, there are many professors of christianity; who are enemies to the cross of CHRIST. *They profess that they know GOD;*

GOD; but in works deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. Mark these men, ye who are the real disciples of an ascended Redeemer, and have no fellowship with them, that they may be ashamed. And be ever careful to continue in your obedience : thus will you shew your faith by your works.

NOW the GOD of peace, that brought again from the dead, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through JESUS CHRIST; to whom be glory for ever.

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GOD, but is upon every man, being obedient and obedient
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